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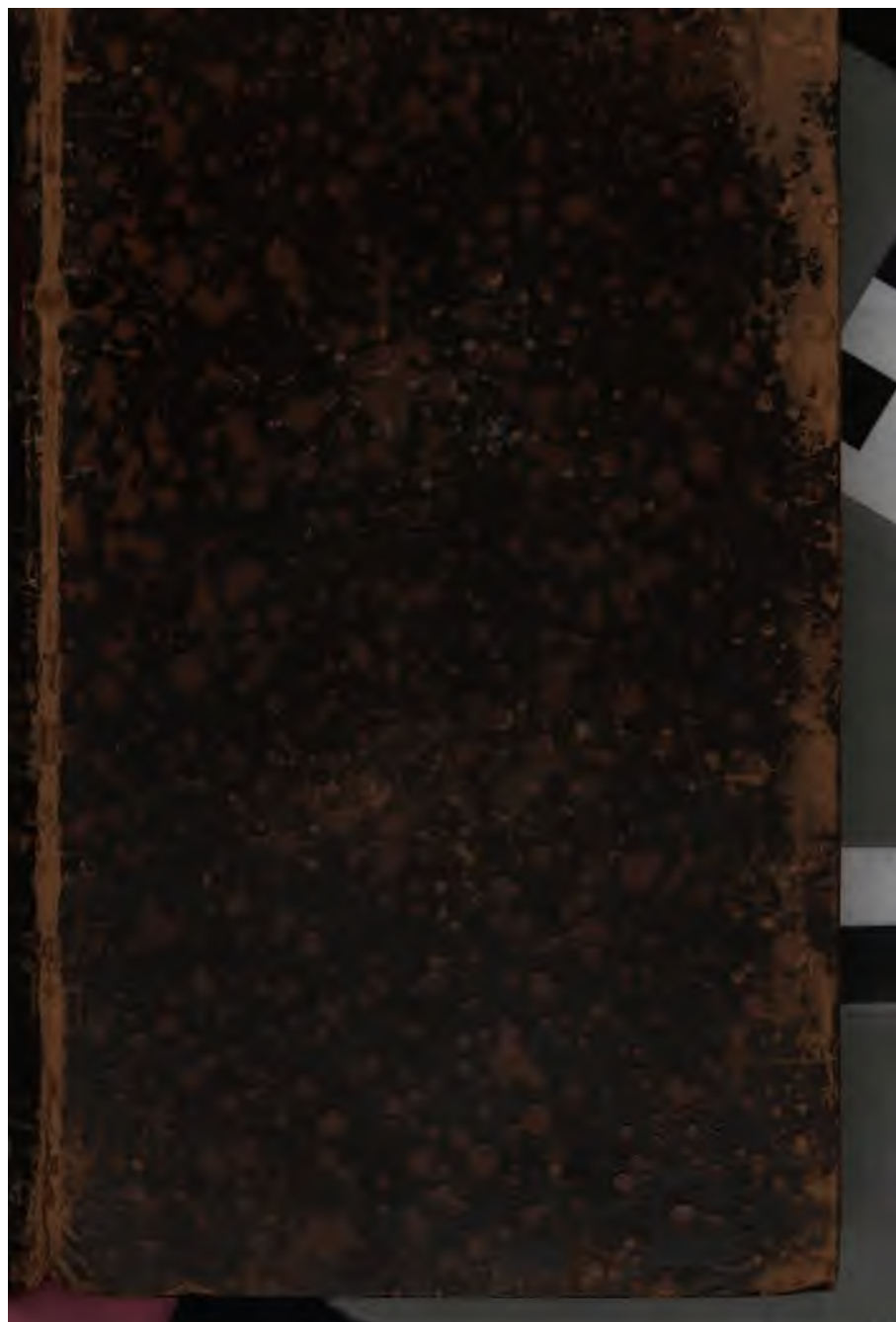
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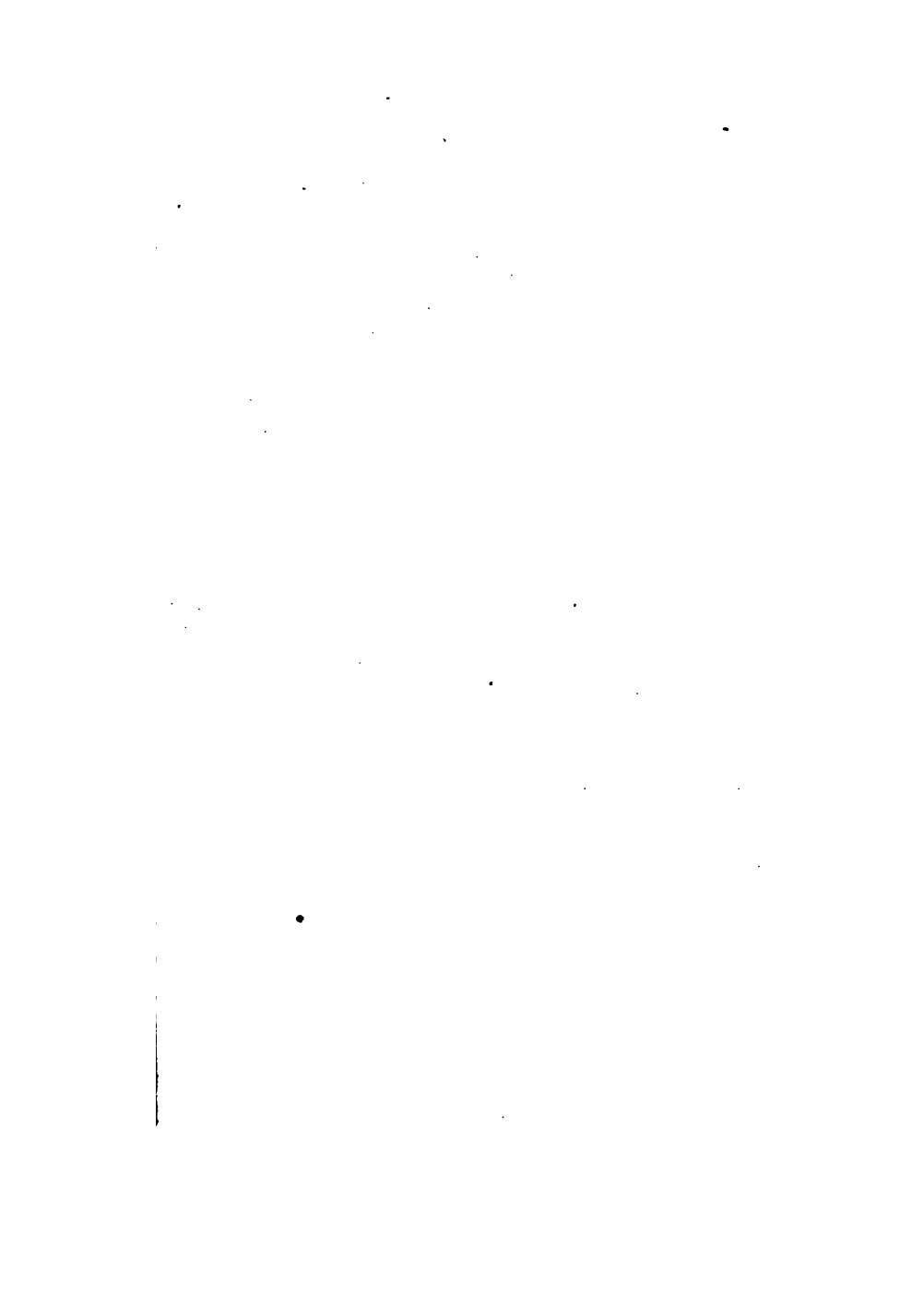
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THE SIEGE  
OF  
ROCHELLE;  
OR,  
THE CHRISTIAN HEROINE.

BY MADAME DE GENLIS.

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TRANSLATED  
By R. C. DALLAS, Esq.

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VOL. I.

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L O N D O N :

Printed by Cox, Son, and Baylis, 75, Gt. Queen Street,  
For B. DULAU and Co. Soho Square; and J. HUGHES,  
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THE  
*TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.*

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THE second title in the original work is *Le Malheur et la Conscience*, to which I have not adhered. I was pleased with the idea of a *Christian Heroine*, and as it is, in fact, the spirit of the following novel, I trust that the Authoress, should this translation ever reach her hands, will approve the substitution.

I was pleased with it in more points of view than one. I have long harboured the design, or rather the wish, of composing a novel founded entire-

ly on the spirit of Christianity ; but the more I considered the subject, the more difficult the execution of it appeared to me. To give dignity to humility, and spirit to meekness ; to make power, and wealth, and honour bow their gigantic heads before faith, hope, and charity ; to pluck the laurel from the hand of victory and substitute promises of an invisible crown of glory, and to bury the sword at the foot of the cross, appeared to me to be very possible ; but I also conceived that it required the eloquence of a Rousseau, the endowments of a Fenelon, and the mystic spirituality of a Berkley, not to say the pen of an Apostle. Whenever, therefore, I have thought of the design, I have looked with a longing eye at the delightful consciousness that would repay the successful au-

thor, and abandoned it as beyond my grasp. I can imagine the unlimited delight of such a consciousness, by the pleasure which I felt at the effect that was produced on the mind of a youth of eighteen by my *attempt* to give an elevated view of a Christian priest in my novel of *Aubrey*. He had chosen the Church as a profession : " The view of it," said he in one of his letters, " is now rendered awful to me ; but I contemplate it with some hope and with entire sincerity of intention." Amiable young man ! I know not that I shall ever find a better opportunity to pay him a tribute of love and admiration : let me be allowed, then, to dedicate one sentence to him, even if it should be deemed misplaced. Mild, diffident, studious, endowed with genius, and panting after eternal realities, he

had received from nature a constitution not formed to detain him long from Heaven, whither he took his flight fourteen months after the date of his first letter, written to me from school.

The title of the *Christian Heroine* pleased me in another point of view. It is the observation of a good writer and distinguished speaker, of one whose praise is to be traced to a higher source than flows from the pen or the tongue ; “ that if all the peculiarities of Christianity had never existed, or had been proved to be false, the circumstance would scarcely create the necessity of altering a single syllable in any of the most celebrated of these performances ; ” \*

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\* A Practical View of the prevailing Religious Systems, &c. contrasted with real

that is—novels. Here, then, is a novel, which it would be necessary to alter in almost every page, if the peculiarities of Christianity had never existed, or had been proved to be false. Such a novel appeared to me to deserve the title I have given to it, and which I had long cherished with a view of bestowing on a composition of my own, but which a sense of my feebleness first, and now this publication, has rendered useless to me. Not, however, that my imagination would have led me to a similar plan or a similar style. The talents of the Authoress have been long known and appreciated: I cannot add to their fame, and it is not for her Translator to point out

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Christianity. By William Wilberforce, Esq.  
Page 396 of the Sixth Edition.



faults if he found any. I do not, however, think I should have been *prudent* in adopting a different plan and style ; because, perhaps, romantic situations and glowing pictures are generally necessary to keep attention alive. I should have thrown *my* heroine into an every day suit ; she should have depended more upon herself ; and I should have made her faulty at least, if not guilty. The incidents of the piece I would have endeavoured to make new, but they should have been at hand ;—they should have been the occurrences of common life, and of the nineteenth century. *My* Clara would not have been a Catholic : I would have bestowed upon her a fervid imagination, but would have drawn a strong line of demarcation between the solid persuasion of providential interferences which daily strike the eye of rea-

son, and those ecstasies which embody unreal forms in occasional miracles to the senses. The Authoress, I see, treads altogether upon more captivating ground than I should have been able to take under my management, and I am but more and more persuaded that I have properly estimated my own strength in relinquishing the attempt.

I beg leave, without being considered as pedantic, to take this opportunity of saying a few words respecting the use of God's name. We have heard of a great character, who never spoke it without a pause of reverence. This could never be generalised; and as the name of our Creator is not less endearing than awful, it is not to be wished that the use of it should be interrupted. It is never taken in vain, and cannot be too

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literature, and generated monstrous productions. The passions had subverted France ; the passions were therefore to be deified : they were wrought up to the pitch of crimes, then boldly offered for public admiration. Suicide was represented as *a sublime act* ; true sensibility was accounted insipid ; love, in works of imagination, was no longer called a weakness, but was made to commit atrocious cruelties ; Cupid was figured as enveloped in black crape, with a dagger in his hand, hovering over graves, and meditating crimes : such was the form under which love was raised to the rank of *a virtue* ! The car of Venus was no longer

drawn by doves : Venus herself, tearing off the zone of the Graces, was transformed into a Bacchante, and frequently into a Fury. Then the heroes of romance, according to this revolutionary mythology, became frantic barbarians, constantly threatening, constantly in a fury with the object of their idolatry. Some, in their assignations, expecting their mistresses with the ferocious impatience which a sanguinary ruffian might feel in waiting for his prey, *gnaw stones* in the rage of expectation ; others, in some amorous pique, open their veins, and make their blood spirt out upon their mistresses, or threaten to throw them into the



Seine; and they almost all conclude with killing themselves. The heroines, on their part, more passionate still, throw themselves down before their lovers, roll *in the dust at their feet*, take poison, or plunge into rivers, destroying with themselves the embryo fruits of their love.\*

Those *susceptible* persons who thought such pictures very noble and very affecting, will perhaps say, that the crime on which the whole fiction

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\* My censure of those works is confined to what is immoral in them, and this horrible love. I have sincerely praised the talents of the authors, and, far from retracting, I now add with pleasure, that their later productions are, in every respect, much worthier of such distinguished talents.

of this work is founded ought never to have been drawn. The crime is an atrocious one, but it is told without colouring ; the horrid tale is dispatched in six lines, and does not present any thing more shocking than the passage in which Racine exhibits *the implacable Athalia with a dagger in her hand*, stabbing all her grandsons in their cradle ; nor is Cleopatra poisoning herself to poison her son a common crime : scenes of this kind tolerated at the theatre, have a greater claim to toleration in the closet. Perhaps in endeavouring thus to support myself by the authority of great names, the only thing I shall gain by this kind of apology, will be,

to read in some review that I have compared myself to Corneille and Racine.

Some have painted fanaticism, that is, an extravagant and sanguinary zeal, far more reprobated by the gospel than by human wisdom ; others have painted the enthusiasm of all the dangerous passions : for my part, I have endeavoured, in this work, to paint the only enthusiasm which cannot produce excesses injurious to others and one's self, the only enthusiasm that is accompanied with an invariable moderation of principles, the only enthusiasm that allows to subsist together, what, in all else, are destructive of each other ; meek-

ness and energy, fervour and reason, empassioned ardour, and constancy. In a word, I have endeavoured to paint the enthusiasm of true piety. I meditated upon the use of which it might be to others and to one's self, in every situation of life, and I then laid the plan of this romance. The plan necessarily required a *perfect heroine*, and to paint her such with truth and probability, I have made her humble, docile, and obedient to the counsels of a virtuous guide : for it is impossible that a young woman, whatever be her principles and the purity of her heart, should be able to conduct herself always irreproachably, if she depends too much upon her own

strength, and disdains the counsels of experience.

c. It seemed to me, that, independently of all religious ideas, this fervour of the imagination, and these\* enthu-

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\* M. de Chateaubriant was the first who painted in a romance (Attila) the enthusiasm of piety, but here it is represented in points of view entirely different. M. de Chateaubriant has described savage manners with incomparable spirit: he has shown virtue sublime in deserts. In these volumes, she is veiled, mistaken, persecuted in society, and compelled by a positive and sacred duty, not only to sacrifice herself, but to hide her head, to annihilate herself in the eyes of all the world. These two works then, though inspired by the same creed, and same principles, have, fortunately for this, no manner of resemblance to each other.

siastic impulses of the soul, would be interesting, as studies and developments of the human heart; but this thought had no influence whatever with me in the choice of such a subject; and no one will imagine that in the composition of this work I have been actuated by the desire of pleasing every body.

DE GENLIS.

## ERRATA.

### PAGE LINE

14	7	<i>for</i> penerate <i>read</i>	penetrate.
25	12	himself	herself,
27	1	carpet	cloth.
165	12	Clara	her.
157	19	At the end of the paragraph concluding with the word <i>gratitude</i> , there should have been a reference to a note at the end of the volume.	

## THE SIEGE

OF

## ROCHELLE.

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AT the close of one of the finest days of a hot summer, the young and noble-minded Valmore and his amiable sister, tired by a long walk through the fields, stopped to rest themselves on the skirt of a beautiful meadow. Valmore, who held his little Julian by the hand, now suffered him to go and gather the wild flowers that presented their tempting colours. Julian, with all the vivacity of his age, ran on, and ranged at a distance.



Valmore seated himself by the side of his sister, on the turf of a gently rising ground, and, crossing his arms on his breast, contemplated with rapture the heavens and enchanting landscape before him. At times his eyes caught and rested on Julian, his lovely boy, the object of his tenderest affection and of his dearest hopes ! He yielded his imagination to the charm of an exquisite reverie. He enjoyed the thoughts of his happiness, and of his schemes ; for he could review the past without remorse, and dared to depend upon the future ! . After a long silence, he turned to his sister, and affectionately taking one of her hands, which he pressed in his, said to her : “ My dear Amelia, under how happy a star was I born ! . . . . Your prudent care has saved me from the irregularities so

common to youth : the difference of our ages is not so great as to destroy the equality of affection between us, yet it is sufficient to have given you all the rights, and all the authority of an instructress and of a mother. You have not been exempt from uneasiness and troubles ; your tears were shed over the grave of our parents, and I was too young to share the sorrow with you. From that time, under your guidance, every thing has gone well with me. It is true, my sister, that I have lost the worthy woman you chose for me : a virtuous wife, and the mother of my Julian, cannot but have been dear to me ; but I need not tell you that her heart, a stranger to ardour, required nothing more of mine than esteem : I wept for her, Amelia, but I did not feel that I had lost with her the source of

happiness. The immense inheritance of the Duke de Dermond, secures Julian a brilliant title and a princely fortune, and I may now, without injury to the interests of my beloved boy, dispose of my heart and hand according to my inclination."——

"Certainly," replied Amelia, sighing, "I ought not to be surprised that at the age of six and twenty you should wish to marry again. But you are now happy, and are going to enter upon a new career! . . . Though your future days cannot but present a pleasing and brilliant prospect, yet for me a cloud hangs over it! . . . She whom you are going to marry is so young! . . . Clara is but seventeen years old!"——"But she possesses such native charms, and is so pure! With all the innocence of her age she combines so much reason, and a

character so perfect!"—"She is a charming girl I allow, and her birth is noble; nor do I think it extraordinary that you should prefer Clara without a fortune to the rich heiress whom the Cardinal de Richelieu pitched upon for you."—"Why then, my dear sister, do the thoughts of our marriage appear to give you pain?"—"I have already told you, that I have the most invincible dislike to Clara's father, the silent Montalban, whose sullen countenance forms so striking a contrast with the affected softness of his language."—"I cannot conceive, so naturally indulgent as you are, how you can have taken such a prejudice against a man, in whom you have seen nothing to blame."—"What shall I say to you? he frightens me. There is something to me so horrible in his sullen look,

ever changing its object when noticed, ever fixed when he thinks himself seen ! He does not look, he eyes ; and that with the pangs of a troubled conscience. Besides, his whole conduct, his whole life is mysterious. Born a Frenchman, he lived twenty years in Germany, and fifteen after he became a widower, yet he sent his only daughter into France while still in arms. At the convent she was brought up with a sort of magnificence ; nothing was spared in her education, and her father is notwithstanding a ruined man : nothing is known of what he was doing, or what place he held at the court of the Elector of Saxony. Through some unaccountable caprice, he was always sending his daughter valuable trinkets and jewels, yet never took a single journey to see her. He gives it out

that she will one day possess a large fortune, but refuses to explain himself upon the subject. To complete the picture, he has not known her more than a year, yet, cold and harsh to her, he has not the slightest appearance of loving her."—"What is it to us that there is something singular in his character? He did not educate Clara."—"Thank heaven, there is not the slightest resemblance between them."—On this Valmore smiled, and changed the conversation. Presently after, the sky became covered with clouds, and a dreadful clap of thunder made all the valley ring . . . . "Julian! Julian!" cried Valmore terror-struck, and darting down the slope into the meadow, at the extremity of which he thought he saw, by the light of a vivid flash, Julian struck to the ground by the

lightning . . . But in a moment Julian was in his arms! After such a shock, the soul, completely agitated, yields itself to new joy with painful tenderness! Valmore was so overcome by this fearful sight, that the possibility of losing his son seemed to have occurred to him for the first time. In what father's heart did ever this melancholy foresight spring spontaneously! So easily does love convert into certainty the hope that our child will survive us! So far do we see his tomb removed from our own! . . . Alas! it is rather a wish than a law of nature! It is a necessary promise, but too often treacherous, and which may, before our eyes, be broken a thousand times, without our ever ceasing entirely to depend upon it. Valmore, with the liveliest emotion, pressed Julian to his bosom: a deep

melancholy feeling impressed on his labouring soul the most painful foreboding, and his cheeks were bathed with tears; in vain did Amelia speak to him; he heard her not. In a few minutes, however, he appeared to recover himself. Amelia then urged him to return to the house, observing that the lowering sky and the flashes of lightning showed that the storm was not over. "Yes," replied Valmore, sighing, "the lightning seems concealed within those black clouds; yet, but a few minutes since, how bright and serene did the horizon appear to us! Alas! too just an image of life, and of my future days perhaps!" As he spoke these words, he grasped Julian's hand; for at that anxious moment he could not have endured his going from him, and he



took the way to the house in pensive sadness.

These painful impressions were soon effaced by the presence of Clara, who had left the convent and had come that very evening with her father. The marriage was appointed to be celebrated at the return of Montalban from a journey which he was going to take for a few days.

Clara, now seventeen, sensible, innocent, and ingenuous, loved Valmore without uneasiness, and without attempting to conceal the pure sentiment she felt. She thought so highly of him that in studying the means of pleasing him, she aimed only at gaining his esteem. Valmore's opinion was of inestimable value to her; she was not even confident of the justness of her own intentions,

till she had his approbation. To a soul replete with candour and sensibility, Clara united every exterior charm. She had a fine complexion, with delicate and regular features ; and her person, tall, elegant, and majestic, gave a very striking character to her beauty.

Clara had not known her father more than a year ; and never receiving from him the slightest mark of tenderness, filial respect was her only feeling towards him, except dread, indeed, which predominated in her heart. Montalban had at first been extremely desirous of concluding a marriage between Valmore and Clara ; but that was in consequence of a mistake he had fallen into respecting Valmore's fortune. Seeing him in possession of one of the finest estates in the kingdom, he imagined

that he might settle it upon the children of a second marriage, whereas Valmore had no power over it. The Duke de Dermond, father of the lady whom Valmore had lost, and whose name was the same as his, had survived his daughter three years, and had, at his death, left his estate subject to the following conditions: to Valmore for life, if he remained unmarried, and after his death to Julian; but if Valmore married again, the property was to vest in Julian, on his coming of age; and lastly, if Julian died before his father without legitimate children, the estate was to revert to Valmore.

As soon as this disposition of the estate was known to Montalban, he determined to break off the marriage; not from any interest that he took in Clara's welfare, but from considera-

tions of a personal nature, which completely swayed him . . . . . A vehement passion for gaming, and secret debaucheries had ruined his fortune. Among his debts there was one in particular which endangered his reputation and his liberty. If Clara married greatly, Montalban, without having recourse to the man whom she married, would have a certain means of discharging that debt ; but it failed him if her establishment was of an ordinary kind. Valmore, in possession of the Duke de Dermond's estate, was one of the greatest matches in France ; but a common one without it. Montalban had therefore been tempted to break with Valmore : however, he had carefully concealed his design, and soon afterwards, changing his mind, he resolved to consent to the marriage, without the

possibility of being suspected to have wavered on the subject.

Montalban was one of those monsters whom it is impossible to describe: the deepest knowledge of men, of their passions and of their vices, will not enable us to penetrate into the recesses of a heart no longer human: premature corruption had debased his soul from his infancy; headstrong passions had heightened all his vices; every scheme he formed was an infernal plot; his desires, his wishes, his very hopes were crimes.

However, every preparation was making for the nuptials of Valmore and Clara. Valmore was transported with his happiness, and with the gaiety that reigned throughout the house; but particularly with the lively joy of Julian, and with Clara's engaging tenderness for the boy whom he

idolized. Fain would he have united in one idea these darling objects; fain, too, would he have rendered Julian and Valmore inseparable in the heart of Clara. He had Clara painted at full length, holding Julian in her arms, and placed the picture in his study: he gave Clara a bracelet containing his own portrait and that of Julian; and this Clara had rivetted on her arm, that she might carry it with her, she said, to her grave. So general was the joy throughout the house, that even Montalban seemed to partake of it. Clara remarked it with delight; but when she was alone with her father, she could not help feeling a sort of dread at finding in him humour more perverse, and manners more savage than ever.

One morning while Montalban was hunting, a servant brought Clara

a box just arrived from Germany, which was supposed to be for her, as no one had been able to read the direction, which was written in German. Clara was accustomed to receive packages of jewels and trinkets from Germany addressed to herself, and Montalban had told her that these presents came from a relation of his in the principality of \*\*\*, and that the reason of their being unaccompanied by letters was, that his relation did not understand French. Clara gratefully accepted these magnificent presents, without thinking of the singularity of her benefactor's profound silence. She had not a doubt of the new box being intended for her, and placing it upon a table, immediately opened it: but she was very much surprised to find in it only a blue silk handkerchief bordered

with red, a great knife, the ebony handle of which was tipped with a fawn's foot, and a rope-ladder. She now examined the direction, and found that the box was addressed to her father. As she stood in excessive dread of his harshness, she was very much vexed that she had opened it. She thought, however, that she could shut it in such a manner as to escape his notice. At this moment Valmore happened to be going by her window, which was open, and he stopped. Clara turned her back to him; but in her hands he saw the knife, the blue silk handkerchief, and rope-ladder, which she was about to replace in the box. After looking a moment in silence, and without being seen, Valmore went on, and knocked at Clara's door to ask if she would go and walk, opening the



door at the same instant. Clara thought it was her father; she blushed, and hastily shutting the box to hide it, threw over it a large muslin veil which lay upon the table. Valmore perceived her embarrassment and emotion without guessing the cause, or being uneasy at it, convinced that it was merely a childish action. "What were you about there?" said he to her smiling. At this question Clara, already confused, replied, without knowing what she said, *that she was working embroidery*. Valmore was rather surprised at this little falsehood, but unwilling to encrease her embarrassment, changed the conversation, and staid but a minute. As soon as he was gone Clara carefully shut the box, and carried it to her father's room; nor did he find out that it had been opened, for

Clara, on receiving it, had desired the servant not to mention it.

Montalban now set out for Pontoise, promising to return in two or three days ; and on the same day Valmore went to Paris on business, intending to come back on the day following. His estate was only six and thirty miles from Paris. Amelia and Clara, finding themselves alone in an immense mansion, recollected with some alarm that the forest which skirted a part of the park was the haunt of robbers, and that several murders had lately been committed there. They knew that a neighbouring seat, about three months before had, in the absence of the family to whom it belonged, been attacked with open force, and pillaged by these banditti. While Valmore was with them they never thought of danger, but when

he was away, they lived in dread. The servants were made to keep watch all night, but when the day broke all fears vanished, for Valmore was expected in the morning.

Clara rose early. It was then the month of August. Julian the evening before had expressed a desire for some peaches, and Clara pleased herself with the thought of surprising him agreeably this morning. She had filled a basket with the fruit, and was going to Julian's apartments, when she was informed of the arrival of father Arsene, a venerable monk, who had possessed her full confidence from her earliest years. She flew to meet him, and led him to her closet, where opening her whole heart to the good monk, Clara painted all the happiness she enjoyed. "My daughter," said father Arsene, "may heaven

realize your hopes!"—"My lot is fixed; I am to marry Valmore in two days!...I am about to be united to reason, virtue, and perfect goodness! Father, you have no longer to fear for me either the dangers of the world and bad examples, or the inexperience of youth. Valmore will be my pattern and my guide. To pursue the happy road you have described to me, I have but to imitate and obey him. Is it possible that I should ever venture on a doubtful action, or take an imprudent step? His esteem and confidence are dearer to me than life."—"My daughter," replied the holy man, "you will have a duty to perform of which I have never yet spoken to you: a child of a former marriage will now demand your tenderest care."....—"Oh!" cried Clara, "Julian, lovely

boy ! is dear to me beyond expression. Has he not excited in my bosom the first feelings of a mother ! and what other child can Valmore ever love so well ? He must always then be my darling son."

The worthy father Arsene applauded these sentiments from the bottom of his heart. He looked with delight into the ingenuous soul which he had formed. "My daughter," said he to her, "enjoy your happiness ; yet ever keep in mind that it is unstable, like every other earthly blessing. Be ever ready through life to sacrifice it, without a murmur, to the omnipotent will of the arbiter of our fate." As he said this, father Arsene rose. He was engaged to go to a seat in the neighbourhood, but promised to return the day before that appointed for Clara's marriage.

The moment he left her Clara took up her basket of peaches to carry to Julian. The lovely boy had apartments in a little pavilion, at the end of which there was a pretty garden, completely separated from the house by the walls of the park. At the bottom of the garden there was a door that opened into the forest, but which, since the alarms occasioned by the robbers, had been kept locked, and Valmore took care of the key. In this pavilion, which had a communication with his father's room, Julian slept; and he passed his time there under the care of a young governess, and an old footman. The latter having had an attack of the gout for ten days, though not confined to his bed, was unable to follow Julian about the garden. The governess, who had an intrigue, had

adopted the plan of receiving her lover before the hour of the family's rising; she used to dress Julian in haste, and send him by himself into his little garden; after which she never looked for him or called him for an hour and a half. Clara came to the pavilion in a quarter of an hour after this young woman's lover: she found the first door ajar, and went on without stopping or going into Julian's room, whom she never went to see so early. Besides, intending him the pleasure of a surprise, she wished to go into the garden, not thinking him yet there. She crossed the garden without meeting Julian, who was playing in a grove, and went into a summer-house, where she knew that he breakfasted every morning. She put her basket of peaches on a table belonging to the room, and the

table being completely covered with a large cloth that reached to the ground on every side, she conceived the idea of concealing herself under it, and in that situation to wait for Julian and enjoy his astonishment. The innocent Clara entered this summer-house, happy, beloved, blooming with youth, gaiety and joy ; but how was she to leave it? . . . That fatal cloth, that mournful pall, under which she laughing threw himself, veiled at once the most unfortunate of victims ; she was to be dragged from beneath it only to be plunged into the deepest abyss of human misery ! Glory, happiness, reputation, ye uncertain blessings of life ! ye were to be torn from her. And what was to be left her ? The consolation for every woe, the reward for every sacrifice, a conscience void of offence.



In about ten or twelve minutes after she had hid herself under the table, she heard the sound of steps approaching the summer-house, and was soon extremely surprised at hearing the voice of her father, whom she thought to be fifty miles off. At first, a vague sensation of fear kept her under the table, but she was just going to come out, when she heard her father and little Julian enter the summer-house. Amazed and petrified, Clara remained motionless and dumb. . . . "Dear me! Mr. Montalban," said Julian, "what do you want with me? . . . you frighten me. . . . I want to go to my governess." . . . Here Julian's sweet voice stopped abruptly. . . . Immediately after, a smothered scream escaped through his lips, and he fell on the floor . . . A hand raised the

skirt of the carpet, and a bloody dagger was thrown on Clara's gown; but no one looked under the table: the distracted Clara lay senseless, and the murderer, the execrable Montalbán, escaped. . . . The monster had been informed by his valet-de-chambre of the intrigue of the devoted Julian's governess, and that the child was every morning an hour and a half alone in the garden. The villain had a key of the door that opened into the forest. He was prepared if, contrary to his expectation, he found the governess in the garden, to turn his appearance there into a joke; for who could ever have conceived an idea of such a crime! When on entering the garden he had ascertained that Julian was there alone, he took the precaution of double-locking the pavilion-door on the side towards the

garden, that he might have time at all events to perpetrate a crime which required but a very few minutes to commit. After the murder, he went out by the forest-door, which he took care to leave locked. Before he quitted the place he threw, and left upon the wall the rope-ladder which he had received from Germany, which the unfortunate Clara had had in her hands, with the knife and handkerchief, and which she had afterwards, unknown to her father, carried to his chamber: having done this, he mounted his horse, and set out full gallop for Pontoise by a cross road. Montalban, certain of not being suspected of this unparalleled crime, imagined that the murder would be attributed to the banditti of the forest, from the ladder being found on the wall; as they were

known to have scaled some garden-walls in that manner. He imagined, too his grand point gained, and that his crime had secured to Valmore the full and entire title to the dukedom of Dermond. Clara would now be married to the richest nobleman in France, and it has been already observed, that from some mysterious cause it was only by that means that Montalban could obtain a large sum of money to discharge a debt, the consequence of his failing to do which would be, that in the course of three months, he would be ruined, and for ever deprived of his liberty, or be compelled to fly and live in perpetual exile.

In about an hour Julian's governess going to look for him, was astonished to find the door locked on the side towards the garden: she made fruit-

less efforts to open it, and vainly called the unfortunate child, who no longer existed ! She then went for the servants, who returned with her, and having forced the lock, opened the door, and ran over the garden, without finding the child. The governess then went into the summer-house, followed by the servants. What horror presented itself to their eyes ! Julian, with a handkerchief tied round his mouth, deprived of life, stabbed in two places with a dagger, bathed in his blood, and lying on the floor ! . . . The servants gave piercing cries, and ran back to the house with the shocking tidings. Amelia, bewildered, flew from her room. Valmore was at that moment arrived from Paris, and alighting from his carriage. Struck with the tumultuous scene within, he asked the reason of

it, but the only answer he could obtain was tears: he rushed into the house, and hearing the name of Julian, flew to the pavilion, and darted into the summer-house. Amelia, pale and dishevelled, was there; she had just gone in, and had taken the bloody body of Julian into her arms to bestow useless cares upon it. . . .

Valmore seized on the lifeless body of his boy, tore it from the hands of his sister, and as he pressed it to his bosom felt as if his heart was breaking: he called upon him in a choaked voice; then in a dreadful tone repeated: *the murderer!* . . . *the murderer!* . . . *where is he?* In the convulsive movements with which he was agitated, Valmore had drawn a corner of the cloth away from the table; the cloth soon after, sliding with its own weight, fell entirely upon the

floor, and discovered Clara, who raised herself, opened her eyes, and stared wildly. Valmore looked at her, beheld the knife which he had seen in her hands two days before now stained with blood lying on her white gown, and knew the blue silk handkerchief still hanging on the shoulder of his Julian. . . . He was petrified with despair, amazement, and horror. . . .

At that moment a servant brought in the rope-ladder found on the wall, saying that the assassins had forgotten to take it away with them. "Oh God! Oh God!" cried Valmore, "the ladder, the handkerchief, the knife! . . . and concealed beneath the table, and stained with the blood of my poor boy! . . . Speak!" continued he in a thundering voice, addressing Clara, "Speak!" . . . At these words, Clara, reduced to the dreadful alter-

native of accusing her father and bringing him to the scaffold, or of taking upon herself an execrable crime, Clara, despairing, undone, replied : " I can say nothing in my defence."—" Let her be loaded with irons," cried Valmore furiously, impelled by rage and vengeance : " let her be tied with those ropes which her infernal artifice threw upon the wall to divert suspicion. . . . Let her be closely confined till she is delivered into the avenging hands of justice. Monster ! you shall expire in torture, and I will live to see your execution." . . . . As he said this, the wretched Valmore lost all recollection, and fell senseless into the arms of his sister. He was taken to his room, put into bed, and revived ; but he continued in a state of stupor, which excited apprehensions both for his reason, and



his life. He neither shed a tear nor uttered a single complaint; but at times his hands appeared to repulse with horror an object which seemed to beset him, and twice or thrice the name of Clara escaped from his lips.

Meanwhile, Valmore's servants drew the unhappy Clara from under the table in a disgraceful manner, and tying her innocent hands close together with thick ropes, dragged her in that state to a tower in the castle, where they shut her up and left her by herself.

Clara, insensible to all these outrages, retained but two clear ideas, and those so closely united, that they seemed to form only a single one in her imagination; the murder of Julian, and Valmore's fatal mistake. She had Valmore constantly before her eyes, darting his dreadful, me-

nacing looks at her ; she still heard those dreadful words : *Monster . . . I will live to see your execution . . .* “To see my execution !” said she, “rest satisfied, you have seen it ; no other will equal the horror of that which I have suffered, which I have felt . . . I have beheld your fury and your hatred, I have heard your lips uttering . . . At that instant, every pang that human nature is subject to, rent, blasted my heart ; and I have endured all the ignominy allotted to the greatest crimes . . . When I ascend the scaffold, I shall there at least see death ! . . . Death ! my only refuge . . .” These lamentations were followed, not by tears, but by a frightful immobility. She remained for some minutes pale, chilled ; her eyes fixed wildly straight before her ; looking without seeing ;

suffering without thinking; fortanately deprived of the faculties of memory and imagination; and relieved by an overwhelming apathy of half her sorrows. But her torments seemed suspended only to give her strength to support afterwards the whole force of them without dying. Casting her eyes down suddenly, she saw her gown stained with blood. . . . "Great God!" cried she, starting up, "guilt and murder are about me! . . . Oh heaven! with what blood am I stained! . . . Blood that I would redeem with every drop of my own! . . . And who shed it? . . ." At these words she fell back into her chair. "Oh! can it be," said she, "that the perpetrator of this horrid crime gave me life! . . . And for him must I sacrifice myself! . . . . . What do I say? the sa-

crifice of the deplorable life I received from him would be nothing : but to die dishonoured ! to leave an execrable name to be perpetuated by the atrocity of the crime attached to it ! to carry to the grave the curses of Valmore ! . . . . Yet, not to be able to prove my innocence but by committing a dreadful crime ! for I can clear myself only by parricide, in becoming the accuser of my father ! . . . . Even were I base enough to arraign the real criminal, what should I do with a life which would then be justly blasted ? Valmore would still be lost to me. He would be struck with horror at an unnatural daughter ; and I should endure the only torture from which I am free, I should be forced to approve his contempt. Now, at least, my conscience upbraids me with nothing. . . . Let me die ! it is

the will of Heaven, let me submit." In uttering the last words her tears at length began to flow, and increased so abundantly, as perhaps to prevent her expiring in the tower with oppression and grief. The officers of justice had been sent for, for the purpose of delivering the wretched Clara into their hands. It was five o'clock in the afternoon when the commander of the *Maré-chaussée* arrived with his men. The court and avenue to the castle were crowded with peasants, enraged against Clara, whom they thought guilty of the most horrible crime. They adored their lord, and had promised themselves the satisfaction of avenging him; for they had an idea that Clara would pervert the judgment of the judges by her youth and beauty: they had therefore resolved

to sacrifice her themselves, and without delay. They were much superior in number to the guards of the Maréchaussée, and were almost all armed. They suffered the troop, however, to pass without resistance, and to draw up at the foot of the tower. The commander went in and brought out Clara ; but she no sooner appeared, than the furious multitude rushed towards her, to tear her out of the hands of the Maréchaussée. The very sight of Clara should have been enough to disarm rage and hatred : her delicate hands tied behind her back displayed the perfection of her form ; her long light hair, which had fallen down, covered her shoulders, and the grief and terror painted in her face gave to her heavenly countenance a pathetic and sublime expression. Though she had deter-

mined on sacrificing her life, the kind of death that now presented itself struck her with horror. The sword of justice falls coolly and sedately: in the execution of the law, the Atropos of fabled times is realised to sight; cutting with solemn tranquillity the thread of life. It is possible to die calmly on a scaffold, but it is frightful to fall a victim to the brutal fury of an enraged mob, and to breathe one's last breath amidst the ferocious cries of vengeance and hatred. The Maréchaussée performed their duty, and defended Clara. The commander held her in his arms, and threatened to fire upon the people. The threat made them but the more furious: two of the most intemperate fired their pieces, and, a guard being wounded, a dreadful battle ensued. Clara, terrified, ad-

dressed herself to heaven, and prayed fervently to be immediately snatched by sudden death from the inexpressible agonies of the frightful fate with which she was menaced.

The people, having knocked down several of the guards, were forcing the troop to retire, and were about to seize their prey, when suddenly a voice revered by all, a powerful and protecting voice was heard, calling loudly: *stop, stop*. . . . The crowd obeyed. . . . The voice vibrated to the bottom of Clara's heart; it was the voice of Valmore. . . . The frenzy of the people was appeased as by enchantment: to the fury of this mad multitude suddenly succeeded confusion, apprehension, and repentance. Valmore, just recovering from a long fit, had heard the dreadful tumult, on which he threw himself



out of bed, and, slipping on his gown, flew into the court; where, making his way through the intimidated crowd, and darting in among the officers who were guarding the trembling captive, he found himself before Clara, and within two paces of her! . . . At sight of her angelic and affecting face, every feature of which manifested the most agonizing suffering, Valmore, oppressed, and frozen, stood motionless. . . An irresistible compassion, the forlorn recollection of his love, the thought of the horrid deed which had excited in his soul the violent transports of implacable hatred, were the contending emotions of his heart, and overwhelmed his mind. . . He covered his face with both his hands, saying: "Untie those cords, and let her be taken to Paris with the respect due to

her sex and birth. It is dastardly to insult a woman in the hands of justice." After saying this he hastened away. The people had already dispersed. Clara was carried to the coach that waited for her, for she could not support herself, and the commander of the Maréchaussée, placing himself at the door with his men following, ordered the coachman to take the road to Paris. Valmore desired his servants to escort the carriage to the end of the avenue; a needless precaution, no peasant daring to follow it, or even to show himself.

Valmore went back into the house, and dressed himself, with the intention of going immediately to the Cardinal de Richelieu's at Paris: the Cardinal was a friend of the family's, and had particularly noticed him

from his infancy. After he was dressed he went into his study for some papers. What a sight did he behold! His eyes fixed themselves on the picture of Clara holding the lovely, ill-fated Julian in her arms! ... Tears of rage and grief flowed down his cheeks. "Oh fury! with the features of an angel," cried he, "monster of hypocrisy and cruelty! You took that innocent victim to your bosom only to stab him! On your face beams candour, in your heart lurk perfidy and murder! .... Oh God! deliver me from the agonizing remembrance of that treacherous countenance which interrupts my hatred, and bewitches my reason!" .... Having spoken thus he took down the picture, called his people, and ordered them to cut the canvass; to preserve the portrait of

his son, and to burn that of Clara. He then immediately, though in a burning fever, set out for Paris.

Clara, on her arrival in the metropolis, was sent to the prison appropriated to great criminals: a small truckle-bed, a straw chair, and a little deal table, composed the whole furniture of her gloomy cell. Clara sat down, and cast a foreboding look around. "This then," said she, is my last abode on earth! the last habitation of guilt! . . . What groans have rung along these walls! . . What tears have been shed in this place! . . Mine, at least, flow without remorse! . . . Why should not sleep here suspend my woes? My days, it is true, are counted; a few hours and I am no more! . . . But to the oppressed, whose conscience is tranquil, whose life has been irreproachable, is not

sleep here the happy forerunner of a rest never to be broken again ! . . . . Yet to die abhorred by Valmore ! . . . Oh ! how shall I support this intolerable weight of grief and ignominy ! " A shower of tears interrupted these plaintive expressions. It was eleven o'clock at night : Clara threw herself on the bed with all her clothes on, and from her exhausted state procured some hours of heavy sleep. With what horror did she awake ! All her sorrows assailed her at once. She felt them with new force : she saw Valmore in a state of distraction demanding her death ; she saw the scaffold and ignominy in their horrid forms, and all her courage forsook her.

At nine in the morning she heard the bolts of her door drawn back : she shuddered, imagining that she was

now to be carried before her judges ; what then was her surprise at seeing the venerable father Arsene walk into her cell ! She was extremely affected at the sight of him ; she had not conceived it possible that she should ever again experience an emotion of joy. " Great God !" cried she, " there is then one being on the face of the earth to whom I may open my heart, one who will know my innocence ! . . . Oh father," continued she, " it is with the Almighty as a witness that I mean to speak to you, hear me." . . . Saying this, she fell on her knees. The holy monk prepared himself to receive her confidence, under the sacred seal of confession. Clara, far from having any thing to confess, had only to vindicate herself. Without mentioning her father, and cautious even of saying ought that

might lead to a suspicion of him, she related all the occurrences of the horrid morning, and how the *assassin* slew the ill-fated Julian. In spite of her caution, father Arsene, from her account, and from the answers she gave to his questions, could not doubt that Montalban was the murderer: and for the first time in the exercise of his holy ministry, he not only had no occasion for indulgence, but his heart was penetrated with the deepest sentiment of compassion and tenderness. He was desirous, however, of moderating the expression of them, in replying to one who ought, in the midst of this heroism, to adhere to christian humility in its full extent. "My daughter," said he to her, "were the world acquainted with your conduct, they would say that you had acted sublime-

ly; but profane praise like this, devised by pride, is not such as I am permitted to bestow upon you. Piety admires no human action; it can only approve of them as the simple results of obedience to the divine decrees; for there is nothing great which religion does not teach, and prescribe. The beauty of morals carried to its highest degree of perfection, springs from her alone: eternal source of virtue, she is likewise at once the motive, end, and reward of it. Accordingly, she grants even to the saints themselves no epithet but that of just. Of what should we be proud? Without revelation should we know real virtue? Without submission should we be able to practise it? When we do good, we follow the spirit of the precept, or the precept itself, which commands it; our



only merit is that of submitting. And what can be more just than scrupulously to obey our Creator? Even when we appear perfect, we can have done nothing but what we ought to have done. Therefore, my daughter, glorify God, who enlightens and inspires you; and beware of exalting yourself in your own eyes. But, though the innocent victim of this shocking event, you ought not to accuse yourself falsely; you must endeavour to vindicate yourself, if you can do it without denouncing the assassin. You may say that a murderer, who came from the forest, committed the crime."—"Alas!" replied Clara, "of what use would such a declaration be, opposed to so many appearances against me, that form a mass of proofs, the falsity of which it would require a miracle to

demonstrate? . . . I stole into the pavilion, and at an unseasonable hour! . . . In the first moment of dismay, agitation, and horror, my tongue, though it uttered truth, seemed to make a formal confession of the crime: these words, *I can say nothing in my defence*, spoke my real situation, yet pronounced me the murderer. . . . Besides, Valmore knew again the dagger, handkerchief, and ladder, which he had seen the day before in my hands, and which I imagined I had hid from him; he must have recollected that his appearance at the moment confused me extremely. . . . and that I had even uttered a falsehood for the purpose of concealing from him the contents of the fatal box. How was it possible for him to have been otherwise than convinced that it was

I who had committed the atrocious act?" . . . Here she ceased speaking, and father Arsene for some moments preserved a mournful silence, which he broke by saying, "indeed, indeed, your vindication is almost impossible. But, my daughter," continued he, "do you know that your father has been arrested, and that he is this day to be confronted with you?" . . . "Great God!" cried Clara, "am I to see him again?" . . . "You are, indeed, my child. . . . I have no idea that the perpetrator of such a crime can resolve to accuse himself in order to save you, but it is possible that he may betray himself." . . . —  
"No, no, my fate is fixed! . . . Oh! father, conceive the horror of my situation! In order to snatch from the scaffold one whom no law, human or divine, can now require me

to love, I devote myself to the most ignominious death, to public execration, to the execration of the man on whom I had bestowed my heart ! It would be useless to attempt concealing any thing from you, you have easily guessed all. . . . No, it is not filial piety that commands me to sacrifice myself, but respect alone to a sacred name ! . . . I die in infamy for a man whom the most odious ambition instigated to become the most barbarous murderer : I resign the esteem, the love, or at least the pity of Valmore ; I resign honour, reputation and life, for one who never took a part in forming my mind, and from whom I never received the caresses or the counsels of a father ! . . . for one on whom I can never look again without shuddering !". . .  
—" My child," said Arsene, " your

sacrifice is made. No temporal motive, no earthly vanity sullies the purity of it. You are now known only to God. Remove altogether your views from this abode of mortality, whence you are driven because not seen to be what you are : hated by the world while you are sacrificing yourself to virtue, who than you is better able to despise fame and earthly glory? God is all to you : while you are here loaded with curses, he blesses you ; while men condemn you, he approves ; while deluded judges are about to stigmatize you, and put you to death, the Supreme, the omniscient Judge, prepares a crown of glory for you, and destines you to immortal bliss ! . . . ” — “ Yet, father ! one secret terror has taken possession of my mind . . . ” — “ Is it for you to dread death ! ” — “ I do.

not dread it : can I wish to lengthen my deplorable existence ? . . . But torture . . . I shall not plead guilty, and perhaps confession will be required of me . . . ” — “ What then ! God will inspire you with courage ; he will give you that super-human strength by which so many martyrs of either sex and every age have triumphed . . . . You must call upon him, my daughter ; he attends to the voice of wronged innocence . . . and you have more than innocence in your favour, for it is in your power to escape from tortures and the scaffold. Think, in dying thus, how pleasing your death will be in the sight of God ! . . . . What effect can all the efforts of human power produce on one fortified by the Almighty against them ? Can you be sensible of pain when you shall see God opening his

arms to you, when you shall hear him call you, and when your whole soul shall spring into his bosom? . . . Be assured, my child, that faith is increased by sacrifice : yours, at your last moments, will be that of the saints, you will enjoy heaven before you reach it. God will not suffer bodily pangs to overcome those sublime joys of the soul : his promises are realities, his consolations efface all woes ; they are blessings that surpass unspeakably all terrestrial felicity. It is the will of God, that amidst ignominy and earthly torments you should be ushered into immortal glory and the bliss of the elect, the excess or extent of which the weakness of our faculties will not suffer us to conceive : in a word, your death will be nobler, and a thousand times happier, than that of

the righteous man, who, in the arms of his friends, dies tranquilly in his bed."—" Oh ! my father," cried Clara, " God, God inspires you ; it is God himself who vouchsafes to speak to me through your lips ! You infuse strength into my heart ; What do I say ! You exalt me above myself ! I thought only of my weakness ; in future I shall contemplate only the omnipotence that will support me ! . . . . But, my father, promise me, when I shall be no more to say only these words to Valmore : *She was innocent.*"—" I promise you I will ;" said Arsene.—" Enough," said Clara, " I shall die satisfied." As she said these words, the steps of men walking were heard in the vaults of the vestibule which led to the prison. Clara clasped her hands together, and lowly bent in silence before the



venerable Arsene, who, without delay, gave her his benediction. At that moment the jailer entering the cell, said that Clara was wanted, and that she was to be carried before the judges. "Go, my daughter," said the holy monk, "go with calmness; you will not fail in courage and resignation." After remaining a moment absorbed in thought, still on her knees, still clasping her hands, and bowing her head over her bosom, Clara rose with a firm air, and followed the jailer. Passing through the courts of the prison, she came to the outer gates, and was there put into a coach, which drove to the *Palais de Justice*, where the judges were assembled.

When she entered the court where criminals are examined, her appearance shocked those venerable men,

who, on the depositions alone of Valmore's servants, were already convinced of her guilt. Her beauty, youth, and dignified mien, however, with the air of innocence and candour spread, through her whole countenance, changed the deep indignation of all present into astonishment and pity. She was bade to sit down. . . . . At that moment she perceived Montalban who was to be confronted with her, and who was desired to go up to her. Clara shuddered, and turned away her eyes, which met a large crucifix that hung directly before her: the sight of it gave her new courage; her face, that had turned pale, resumed its natural colour, and the sweetest expression of serenity.— From the charges brought, against Clara, Montalban had learned, with equal surprise and terror, that she

had been witness to his crime. Astonished that she had not yet accused him, he expected to hear her reveal the truth at this examination, and was prepared to deny all. He advanced towards her with a savage look, and eyes inflamed by rage: "Wretch!" said he to her, "show at least some repentance; it will be useless to retract the formal confession you made yesterday. . . ." At this speech of consummate villany Clara started, raised her eyes to heaven, and remained silent. One of the judges then began the examination. He asked Clara what motive could have instigated her to the crime she had committed. "I have committed no crime:" was her answer. Upon this she was shown the fatal knife, still stained with the blood of the innocent victim, the silk

handkerchief, and the ropes. Clara, ready to sink, put her hands over her eyes, and her tears gushed down her cheeks. The following question was put to her. "Do you know these instruments of the crime?" Her sobs prevented her replying. "There," continued the judge, "is the servant who brought you the box which contained them: he says, that when you received it you desired him not to mention its arrival? . . ."—"That is true."—"Previous to the murder, Valmore saw that poniard in your hands; when he came into your room you were confused; and on his questioning you respecting the box, you told a falsehood to conceal from him what it contained: do you deny these facts?"—"No; they are the truth."—"The box came from Germany; who sent it to you?"—"I do not

know. It fell into my hands by chance.”—“ Why did you receive it in a mysterious manner? and why did you open it?”—“ It is impossible for me to answer these questions, yet I am innocent.”—“ Who then committed the crime?”—“ I can say nothing more.”—“ This is confessing yourself guilty.”—“ I am innocent.”—“ Were you advised to commit this crime?”—“ No.”—“ Did ever your father tell you that from motives of interest you ought to wish the child’s death.”—“ Never.”—“ Had the child become the object of your jealousy, from the fondness Valmore lavished upon him?”—“ I felt for that unfortunate boy the affection of a mother.”—“ For what reason then did you sacrifice him, and with such premeditation?”—“ My conscience and my hands are

both unsoiled.”—“ Have you any accomplices ? ”—“ I can have none, having committed no crime.”—“ Of what use can the simple and vague denial of the crime be to you, when weighed against the formal admission of all the facts by which the charge against you is supported ? Let us hear, then, what you have to say in your defence. Explain how the instruments of the deed came to be found in your hands. Account for your great embarrassment on that occasion : tell us why you went secretly, at so unseasonable an hour, into the pavilion ; why you were hid under the table ; why you fainted there after the murder was committed ; and why, in coming to yourself, your first impulse led you to speak these words : *I can say nothing in my defence.* . . . Reply.”—“ I went se-

cretly to the pavilion," said Clara, "because I wished to give the unfortunate child an agreeable surprise. I carried him a basket of fruit which I laid upon the table, and I concealed myself to enjoy his astonishment. . . . ." This genuine explanation appeared so puerile and improbable, and bore by its childishness so shocking a contrast to the atrociousness of the preceding depositions, that she disgusted all the judges so much, that they could not help manifesting their feelings by a low but general murmur, which completed the depression of the unfortunate Clara, already dismayed and undone by the mass of circumstantial evidence produced against her.

After a short silence, one of the judges again addressed her: "You

must have felt great remorse," said he, "at the very moment of the murder, from your having fainted away, and afterwards confessed the whole; let religion again excite in you those salutary feelings. A full confession may perhaps obtain for you a commutation of your punishment, of the death you deserve, into perpetual imprisonment."—"It is for your conscience," said Clara, "to pronounce my sentence, mine has dictated my replies."—"Do you know to what torments this obstinacy exposes you?"—"I do not brave that terrifying rigour; I foresaw, and expect it, but I dare hope that God will give me courage."—"The God of truth is not the protector of falsehood."—"The God of truth will be my strength and my support. . . ."—  
"A view of the instruments of tor-



ture will perhaps make you change this hypocritical cant, which can only excite the utmost indignation."—"I shall speak thus till death."—"Take her away." These words were spoken in a tone of voice which petrified Clara with terror: her imagination immediately brought before her the dreadful instruments of torture, and her blood froze in her veins. Conceiving that she was going to be deprived of life by excruciating torments, she wished for the assistance of Father Arsene, and attempted to ask for him; but her words expired on her trembling lips; a mist came over her eyes, her ideas became clouded, her bewildered reason left her but a confused conception of the horror of her fate, and her very terror was mechanical. . . . Agitated by convulsive motions and unable to stand

upon her legs, the officers of the court were obliged literally to carry her away, holding her up by her arms, into an adjoining room. There they placed her in a chair, and gave her salts to smell. She remained above three quarters of an hour motionless and in a state of stupor, nor was she roused from it till information was brought to her that the judges had decided, and that she must go and receive sentence. She then completely recovered her understanding, and looking around her with astonishment said : " I see no instruments of torture ; am I not to be put to the rack till my sentence is passed ? " She was told that she was not to be put to torture. " Oh God of all mercy ! " cried Clara, " then I have nothing more to fear ! Come." She rose as she said this, and, relieved of a dread-

ful weight, followed the officers with a firm step. At sight of her judges, however, she was again agitated ; but an instantaneous reflection on her situation, and her piety, soon triumphed over this weakness of nature. Before her sentence was read to her, she was told that she was condemned to die. She remained motionless for an instant ; then crossing her arms on her breast she fell upon her knees, looking up and turning her eyes towards heaven. . . . . Erased from the number of the living, she already left the earth, already took refuge in the asylum of eternity ! . . . . . The glowing fervour of her attitude, the sublime and celestial expression of her countenance, struck all her judges with astonishment : the commanding character of innocence and of piety, more convincing than the positive tes-

timony of the senses, or the strongest deductions of poor human reason, raised doubts in every mind, and planted a sting in every heart ; each said to himself : “ *Can she possibly be guilty ?* ” . . . . And whilst, supported by a power divine, she was deaf to fear and insensible to pain or regret, her astonished judges gazed at her in silence, and had not courage to read their own judgment. At length she was ordered to rise and hear her sentence. She was forced from her trance, and compelled to descend again to earth, grieved to find herself still an inhabitant of it. She felt an indescribable emotion, and when she heard Montalban fully acquitted, she found it difficult to repress the violence of her indignation ; she praised God, however, that she had saved her father’s life at the expense of her own, and

that she no longer owed any thing to the most wicked of men.... She trembled when she heard the kind of death to which she was condemned, and the form of the sentence presented ideas which shook her courage. She was standing, but she staggered and turned pale, when the following words were pronounced : *Anne-Clara De Montalban, aged seventeen years, convicted of the murder of Julian De Valmore, is condemned to be beheaded, at twelve o'clock to-morrow, upon the Place de Grève, &c.* At the words, *convicted of the murder*, she cried out vehemently : " No, no !" . . . The judges ordering her to be silent, she obeyed, and, bowing her head over her bosom, burst into tears . . . . At the conclusion of her sentence she asked leave to speak, and having obtained it,

said: " I protest against this sentence, not from any hope of escaping death, but from respect to truth. I did not ask for the assistance of counsel, because, compelled to be silent on the most important points, I could not have furnished any grounds of argument in my favour. I am condemned undeservedly; yet condemned upon the strongest evidence, and my judges are, in my own eyes, neither less upright, nor less respectable. I submit, but without allowing myself to be criminal; for I declare openly, and will maintain to my last breath, that my sentence is founded upon error, and that I am perfectly innocent." Clara spoke these words with so much tranquillity, softness, and dignity, that all her hearers were moved to pity. And now the guards who were to conduct her back to

delicious, if the soul be prey to no remorse. What must it be to one dying nobly for the love of virtue? to one in the bloom of youth offering to God the voluntary sacrifice of a pure life?

Clara knelt before the crucifix. With what a deep sense of tenderness, gratitude, and love, did she contemplate the revered image which brought to her mind all the ideas that in her situation were the best adapted to strengthen, raise, and cheer her soul! In this contemplation she found at once an example of the sublimest sacrifice, and a divine pattern of heroic courage and perfect resignation. Who could better teach her to bear, without hatred and without resentment, the injustice of men; to suffer with gentleness and patience, injury, shame, and death? Every

thought gave her new strength, exalted her imagination, purified, ennobled her sentiments. Every bound of her heart seemed to double in her the power of admiration and of love; and having attained the highest pitch of devout enthusiasm, perfected by divine affection, a regret for transient enjoyments could no longer find room in her soul. She had now no concern in the temporal comfort of resignation; heaven was opened to her view, and her soul, disengaged from all worldly affections, was impatient to spring into it, and to enjoy her glorious immortality. "Oh! Redeemer of the human race!" cried she, "Thou beholdest at thy feet the weakest and most imperfect of all thy creatures! Till now, I have never, without trembling, been able to bear the thought of misfortune, of



death, or, above all, of the loss of reputation; but in this dreadful night, in this my last night, after becoming an object of hatred, of abhorrence to the man I loved; after hearing a sentence which devotes me to public execration, and transmits my name to future generations with infamy, I feel my soul calm and teeming with the sublimest hope. . . .

O prodigy of divine mercy! Yes, this courage is certainly the gift of heaven: and the more sensible I am that it is not my own, the more it strengthens my faith, the more it augments my love and gratitude. . . .

All I feel now is the effect of miraculous interposition! Death vainly presents itself to me under a threatening, ignominious form, denied even the repose of the tomb; the awful voice of terrestrial justice vainly in-

forms me that I shall be deprived of the rites of burial; a power superior to nature dissipates these horrible images; a heavenly voice, speaking to my soul, prevents my hearing these useless threats! God, God animates my spirit, and shields me from the power of terror. His measureless goodness is not satisfied with protecting, with supporting the weak being who yields herself up to him; he does more, he transforms her; my very thoughts are no longer mine, they proceed not from me; they flow from a happy and gracious inspiration!"

Here Clara cast her eye on her hour-glass, and saw that the sand was entirely run out, on which she turned it for the third time: by this she knew that it was one o'clock in the morning, and the last day of her life

.... She looked for a moment at the sand running : " There is nothing, frightful to me in the silent voice of this machine," said Clara, " as while I remain on earth not one minute of happiness is in store for me ! This sand, in running, will never now carry along with it pleasures or joys of mine. . . . Here sensibility has torn my heart, here error and blindness have brought ruin upon me ; but I shall soon contemplate with ecstasy, truth unveiled, unclouded, ever bright, ever unchangeable ; I shall soon be able to admire and to love with enthusiastic ardour unattended with pain ! . . . A little while and my captivity is at an end ; even they who condemned me are about to deliver me. When I am summoned to the scaffold, when that door, clasped with iron, turns on its

kīnges to admit the messengers of death, I shall behold the gates of eternity opening to me ! . . . . How eagerly shall I quit this melancholy abode ! . . . .” These last reflections led Clara into a deep reverē ; her situation and her piety had so elevated her soul, that, her understanding being no longer equal to the elevation of her thoughts, she was unable to follow her ideas. She became absorbed in a sublime and delicious but vague ecstasy. The soul, devout, purified, animated by faith, may, no doubt, conceive immortal joys ; but, at those moments of extreme exaltation, the imagination becomes dazzled, the mind is lost, thought is no longer distinct, nor can any human language express it : meditation has bounds, sensibility has not. Thus are there limits to all those splendid

endowments, those brilliant faculties that flatter our pride ; but to the soul there are none : she can spring into infinity, unite with the inhabitants of heaven, and repose in the bosom even of the Deity !

Clara was not roused from this rapturous state of contemplation till it was broad day : she suddenly perceived a shining light, which appeared to extinguish that of her lamp. " Oh ! ray of immortality !" cried she : " Yes, this day, so brilliant, so serene, is the morning of eternal day to me. What care I for the sentence that loads me with infamy in the sight of men ? The very execution of that sentence will be a revocation of it by the Sovereign Judge of Judges. Already are the people informed of the manner and hour of my death, already are the preparations making for it :

in a few hours I shall ascend the scaffold ;—but with what sensations of love, hope, and joy ! Every step of it will remove me farther and farther, without a possibility of return, from this world of sorrow, and bring me nearer heaven ! . . . At this moment the insulting cries of public indignation every where proclaim my death ; but God tells me I shall live for ever in glory ! . . . . .” As she said these words she pressed her clasped hands to her bosom, and remained some moments in that attitude, absorbed in the profoundest feelings of gratitude and love that faith can excite. All the gifts of divine grace, all the mysterious joys of devotion, had met together in her innocent heart, so worthy of receiving and of feeling them : no painful retrospect, no sting of conscience, marred their sweetness. She

received the most precious reward of a life religious and pure ; God revealed to her at that instant all the felicity of angels.

At four o'clock in the morning she took her prayer-book and prayed till six. She then dressed herself in a long white robe ; after which she again took her book, and resumed her kneeling posture. At that moment Father Arsene entered her room. The holy monk expected to find Clara pale, trembling, and depressed : with what astonishment and admiration was he struck as he cast his eye upon her, and saw her at once calm, animated, radiant ! “ Where am I ? ” cried he : “ With what lustre does the Divine Majesty shine here ! Great God ! thy omnipotence appears to me less admirable when it suddenly changes the face of empires

or suspends the laws of nature, than when it thus invests a weak and timid child with strength and heroism. Oh, Clara ! ” continued he, “ I have been attending a man in his last moments ; an old warrior, celebrated among veterans for his courage and his exploits ; but I was not able to dispel his terrors : he was tormented to the last by the regrets of ambition, and by the dread of eternity. . . . And you, my daughter, you whose experience has been confined to the sanctity of the cloister, you who sought in marriage only a virtuous protector and a faithful friend ; you, in short, whose innocence no passions have blemished — you see in death only a desirable object, and a recompence for the troubles of life. Come, my child, and add still greater vigour to your courage ; come and complete your union :



with that God, full of mercy and of goodness, who calls you, and who is about to take you into his bosom. I have procured leave to administer to you the most august of the sacraments." At these words Clara fell on her knees : Father Arsene sat down by her, and listened to her for some minutes : then opening a silver box, containing a consecrated host, he administered to her the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And now did she think herself really transported into heaven, and in the enjoyment of God. The purity of her ideas, the delicious calm of her soul, the ardour of her joy, her enthusiastic gratitude, all assured her of the supernatural and divine union : to her the world was completely annihilated. It was no longer in the power of the masters of the earth, armed with sovereign au-

thority, to disturb or intimidate a heart elevated above human nature by an all-powerful belief, by the highest hopes, and by a feeling indescribable and sublime. . . . . She had ceased speaking, and, at the knees of Father Arsene, was alone with God, when the jailer entered. There was a mysterious air about him which struck Arsene : after a short silence he begged that what he was going to say might never be mentioned. Being promised this, he presented a letter sealed to Clara : " Here is a note," said he, " which one of your judges, and the oldest of them, has just brought to me for you, desiring me to give it you privately, and not to tell his name : remember your promise." Clara received the note, and the jailer went out. She gave the letter to Father Arsene, who breaking the seal, read out what follows :

“ You are innocent. Of this,  
“ however, I have no other proof  
“ than your countenance, your be-  
“ haviour, and the firmness and ease  
“ of your answers; but an expe-  
“ rience of half a century is neces-  
“ sary to see your innocence through  
“ the damning proofs accumulated  
“ against you. Young men neither  
“ can, nor ought, to judge thus, for  
“ they have not had time to com-  
“ pare the language of hypocritical  
“ guilt with that of innocence.  
“ Truth obscured by false appear-  
“ ances may affect but cannot con-  
“ vince them. Add to this, that  
“ many of your judges must have  
“ been apprehensive, in listening to  
“ you, of yielding to the seduction  
“ of beauty, or of being accused of  
“ it. I am seventy years old: I  
“ gave my voice in your favour, and

“ I still wish to save you. There is  
“ one way to do it : feign a sudden  
“ and violent illness ; the physician  
“ of the prison, whom I have al-  
“ ready gained, will assist in the  
“ stratagem, and you must carry on  
“ the feint for some time ; mean-  
“ while I will make use of all my  
“ influence ; I will see the minister,  
“ I will take upon me to be your  
“ advocate and defender, I will ob-  
“ tain a revision of the proceedings,  
“ and I answer for the success. Live ;  
“ it is the sincere wish of the oldest  
“ of your judges.”

“ What say you, my daughter ?”  
said Arsene. “ Father,” replied  
Clara, “ yesterday I wished for  
death, but it was chiefly to be deliv-  
ered from a hateful existence ; to-  
day I have forgotten the painful  
dream of life : not once during the

whole of last night did the remembrance of my affections on earth, or of my sad calamity, enter my imagination; I saw and heard only God: the world has vanished from my view; my soul has taken her flight towards heaven, and cannot fall down again to the earth without extreme pain. However, I know that it is not permitted me to shorten wilfully the term of my banishment, and that, if just means of continuing life be afforded me, it behoves me to use them; but what are the means proposed to me? a falsehood and artifices which I should never be able to support; I can and I ought to reject them." Father Arsene was so much affected by these words that he could not speak. It was grateful to his soul to admire so much courage united with so much simplicity, or,

more properly, religion, which alone can give such virtues. After a short silence, "my daughter," said he, "fulfil then your noble destiny. You have lived only for virtue, now die for it. Your life was happy and peaceful, but the course of it is cut short by a dreadful storm: this momentary tempest has been permitted by the Almighty to double in eternity the reward reserved for you! Let us employ well all the precious moments we have remaining; let us devote them all to prayer." Saying this he knelt down by Clara, and read aloud the solemn prayers appointed by the church for those who are dying. The venerable man more than once felt his eyes filled with tears at sight of the affecting fervour and firmness of the young victim, whose face, far from indicating the

approach of death, beamed with preternatural lustre.

As Arsene concluded the prayers, the prison clock struck three quarters past eleven. . . . Clara listened, and said calmly : " my last hour will soon strike ! . . . . Oh my God ! " cried she, " it is with the whole fervour of a heart penetrated with gratitude, that I thank Thee for thy manifold blessings ! I thank Thee for saving me from the contagion of vice, and for disposing of my youth in a holy asylum, under the direction of this venerable father ; I thank Thee for calling me away before I could be acquainted with the disorder of the passions and the seductions of the world ; lastly, I thank Thee for appointing me a manner of death unattended with pain, and which has allowed me time to prepare myself

with all my might to appear before Thee!" Here turning to the good old man, who was listening to her with rapture, "And do you," said she, "do you, my true father, deign to give me a paternal blessing." "Yes, my child," replied he, "but forget not before God the unfortunate being who gave you life. Alas! it is he who is to be pitied, and not his innocent victim."—"Oh father," cried Clara, "I shall soon be at the foot of the supreme tribunal, and I will implore divine mercy for him."

Here Clara stopped, thinking that she heard a noise at the entry of the prison. "Father," said she, "bless your child; let me, before I die, receive a paternal adieu."—"Oh God!" said the holy man, placing his trembling hands on the head of Clara, "sovereign protector of innocence,



receive this child into your bosom, and forgive me for the tears I shed at her fate ! . . . I know that I should bless Thee for so glorious a death, when at this moment all the heavenly powers are rejoicing at it. . . . And you, my daughter, go and receive the immortal crown already suspended over your head ; go, pure maid, God calls you, and his angels are expecting you . . . . Go in peace : may no apprehensions impair the joy of so exquisite a triumph ! God will not suffer your memory on earth to remain unjustly calumniated ; leave to him the care of justifying it in a striking manner. As to me, I will be true to my promise ; to-morrow I will see Valmore, and say to him, with the whole emphasis of truth, *Clara was innocent . . . .*” At the name of Valmore, Clara started : it

had upon her mind the effect of a lost impression suddenly revived. For the space of fifteen hours her soul had been so completely united with God that no worldly thought had been able to enter her mind. "*Valmore !*" she exclaimed : " No, father, do not see him. . . . To God alone I address my last wishes. No, do not speak to Valmore : shall we not meet again, and am I not sure of vindicating myself in the presence of God ? . . . "

At that moment the clock struck twelve. . . . Father Arsene trembled. Clara, still on her knees, raised her innocent hands to heaven, crying with ecstasy : " It is come, my last hour at length is come ! " As she pronounced these words vehemently, she crossed her arms upon her breast, and remained some time profoundly absorbed. She then rose, and taking

up the hour-glass restored it to Arsene, saying: "this is yours; time is at an end with me.... Here also is your prayer-book; it has been my consolation and my strength, keep it as long as you live.... but the crucifix shall remain with me till my last breath!...." As she said these words, the door of the cell was suddenly thrown open, and the officers to conduct her to the scaffold appeared. Clara drew from her finger a diamond ring of immense value, and, giving it to father Arsene, desired him to sell it, and to distribute the money it sold for among the poor. Then recollecting that she wore a bracelet containing the pictures of Valmore and Julian, she broke the chain which fastened it to her arm, and giving it to Arsene, begged him to send the bracelet to Valmore's sis-

ter. She then took her crucifix, and throwing a large white veil over her head, gave herself up to the hands of the officers. Father Arsene accompanied her, and was put with her into a mourning coach, which moved in a slow pace through Paris. Clara, concealed by her veil, disappointed the eager curiosity of the crowd that ran to see her, while she, exalted by the sublimest feelings of piety, saw nothing that was passing in the streets, and was deaf to all sounds but to the sweet exhortations of father Arsene. When they arrived at the square where the scaffold was erected, the coach could hardly be drove through the immense crowd that was assembled. The guards, however, forced the people to make a passage, and the coach driving up to the bottom of the scaffold the door was

opened. Clara alighted, when two guards offering to assist her, she gently put them aside, and advanced with a quick but firm step to the scaffold; there turning to see if her venerable confessor accompanied her, she found she had left him at a little distance, and stopped a moment till he came up to her, when she ascended the steps. On coming to the top she took off her veil, and displayed a beauty so dazzling and majestic that all the spectators were struck with wonder and admiration. Clara stood holding her crucifix closely pressed to her bosom; her eyes were raised to heaven, and in that attitude, on her charming countenance, was painted all the candour of an angelic innocence, and all the fervour of a sublime piety. Silent and motionless the spectators gazed at her; the whole

multitude seemed petrified with astonishment. After a moment's silence, Clara knelt, saying at the same time in an audible voice: "I die innocent! Oh God! pardon the unknown author of the crime! open his heart to repentance! . . . . Pardon me my faults, and deign to accept with thy fatherly goodness the voluntary sacrifice of my life . . . ." Here a thousand voices were heard repeating with great vehemence: *She is innocent! She is innocent!* . . . . Clara, attending to God alone, and wishing only for death, turned towards Father Arsene to receive his last blessing, after which she said, as she placed her head on the fatal block: "Oh! my Creator! Oh! my Father! I am now wholly thine! . . . ." The crowd shuddered on seeing the deadly instrument gleam, as the executioner

raised it in the air.... At that moment a man on horseback was seen making his way through the crowd crying: "A pardon! A pardon! His Majesty's pardon for the criminal!" At this unexpected news the square and a great part of the adjoining quay resounded with loud shouts of joy.... Father Arsene blessed God; but Clara, fallen from heaven to earth, felt only the liveliest sorrow at the change. "Alas!" cried she, "I am then to stay and suffer more!" As she said this she attempted to rise, but her strength failed her, and she fell into the arms of Father Arsene. She was taken down senseless from that scaffold which she had ascended with so much courage. Being replaced in the coach, the guards were ordered to carry her to a cloister, solely devoted to the reception, under *lettres-de-ca-*

*chet*, of persons of her sex branded with some crime, or disgraced by a scandalous life.

Clara's pardon had been obtained by Valmore, even before her sentence was pronounced. When the *maré-chaussée* took her from the castle, Valmore, as has been said, set out for Paris himself, two or three hours after Clara. He arrived too late to see Cardinal Richelieu the same evening, but he obtained an audience the next morning at seven o'clock. The Cardinal had already heard of his calamity. That minister, whom several rigorous actions have transmitted to posterity as a cruel and vindictive man, possessed nevertheless a generous and feeling heart\*. In judging

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\* See all the private memoirs of that period.



the conduct of that great man, it should be remembered that he was the depositary and not the real possessor of supreme power. Clemency in the administration of public affairs is a virtue of such elevation, a virtue so divine, as to be a prerogative solely of sovereignty, which alone has the right of exercising it. Thus the prince may sometimes in state affairs listen entirely to the dictates of his heart; the minister, in whom he has placed his whole confidence, should act only for the interest of the sovereign, and to support the royal authority. The one may bend with greatness, the other should be as inflexible as the law; he would be unfaithful to his trust, and would usurp the noblest prerogative of royalty, if he dared to be clement with but the shadow of a risk. Hence the misfor-

tune of being governed by a prime minister. The more genius and principle such a minister possesses, the more rigorous will the government be. The supreme power can never be paternal, but when exercised by him to whom it belongs. Richelieu having attained the summit of favour, resolved to support the rights of the throne, to increase the glory and prosperity of his country, and to lower the pride of the enemies of France. With these noble designs it behoved him also to determine to maintain himself in his place, and to remove whatever might obstruct his plan. He exterminated his enemies, it is true; but his enemies would have annihilated his grand designs, and they were all of them nothing more than conspirators. Those violent actions should be considered in no other light

than as master-pieces of policy, which, dictated by political prudence, were, in fact, no violation of the strict law of real justice ; and to them France is indebted for her welfare and her elevation. This rigour, ascribed to an implacable disposition, was merely a dictate of foresight. Richelieu had mild and easy manners ; he struck terror into the factions, but was adored by all around him. Disdaining the common paths, he made his way to favour, not by intrigue, but entirely by the power of his understanding. Invested with a sovereign authority, he did not endeavour to create a party to preserve it ; he overthrew cabals, but formed none. He maintained his power by indefatigable vigilance, and fortified it by great actions. In fine, he is the only favorite

that was ever known to have excited the admiration both of his own countrymen, and of foreign and rival courts.

Valmore, on entering the prime minister's cabinet, ran and threw himself at his feet, saying in a choaked voice : " My lord ! . . . no torture, and no death. . . . I was to have received her hand ! . . . Let her be confined in a cloister for life. . . . Her death would but weaken my hatred, and I wish to keep alive all the horror she excites in my breast."—" My dear Valmore," said the Cardinal greatly affected, while he raised Valmore affectionately, and made him sit down, " How I pity you ! what an unparalleled crime ! There should be an example. . . ."—" Ah ! my lord ! who could ever again commit such a crime ? . . ."—" It is, indeed, hardly

possible that such another instance of excessive ferocity should ever occur . . . . . So young, and to have a heart so barbarous ! and her beauty, I am told, is matchless." At these words Valmore started, rose, and fell back pale into his chair. At that moment his imagination brought Clara's face before him in so lively a manner that he thought he actually saw her, and he wanted to run out of the room to avoid her. . . . " Oh ! " cried he, " may her fatal beauty be blasted, or may I, at least, for ever lose the insupportable remembrance of it ! But, I conjure your Eminence to grant me her pardon. . . . " — " For me," replied the Cardinal, " to be able to refuse you any thing in your present situation, your desires must be opposed by the interest of the state. She shall have her pardon, I

take upon me to obtain it ; but the King will certainly require that she should be solemnly tried and carried to the scaffold : she must at least be made to feel all the terror of so just a sentence. As for you, Valmore, you may expect of my friendship all the consolation in my power to give you. Endeavour to tranquillize your mind, take care of your health, which appears to me hurt, and when you are in a state to think of things in which I can be of use to you, come back to me and speak freely ; and be assured beforehand that I will do every thing for your advancement, and to improve your fortune.”—“ My lord,” replied Valmore, “ I have now but one ambition, that of distinguishing myself in arms, which presents to me the hope of an honourable death.”—“ No, no,” said the

Cardinal, "you must live to serve your king and country." The Cardinal now rose, on which Valmore took leave of him, and went away. He returned immediately to his seat in the country. He had been in a hot fever from the day of the dreadful event, yet, in spite of his sister's entreaties, he would not go to bed till he had attended the funeral of his son, whose coffin he ordered to be deposited in the chapel of the castle. The body had been embalmed, and was to be enshrined in a magnificent tomb which the unhappy father meant to erect for it.

At eight o'clock in the evening, Valmore, oppressed with fatigue and grief, at length consented to go to bed : the sorrowful Amelia sat down by his bed-side, resolved to watch him a part of the night. Though

his physician had forbidden him to talk, Valmore, who was perfectly in his senses, conversed the whole night with his sister. "Oh! let me speak, let me speak," said he to her, "silence consumes me! What do you ask me to shut up in this sad heart? Inexpressible torments. Alas! I have no hope of relief in lamentation; but how are such sufferings to be silent! . . . Oh! the delirium of ambition! . . . The Cardinal thought to console me by speaking of advancement and of fortune! . . . Oh! how I despise wordly power! . . . This famous minister, this great man, holds in his hands the fate of Europe; and if he had it in his power to change the whole face of the world, to conquer the earth from one end to the other, what good could he do to a heart that has just lost the object of



its affection ! . . . ” — “ Certainly,” replied Amelia, “ there is no consolation for such a sorrow but through Divine Power ; to that, therefore, we should have recourse.” — “ Oh ! ” cried Valmore sighing, “ dare we presume to pray for a miracle ? . . . ” — “ Yes, for those that can heal a deeply wounded heart. In such woes, the strength of mind necessary to support them, the patience, the resignation required, are miracles ; religion alone can work them : do you doubt it ? ” — “ I consent to live ; Is not that a proof of faith ! But for religion, who could prevent me from delivering myself from this abhorred existence ? . . . ” — “ Does not religion, which prevents your committing the only crime that cannot be repented of, already offer you the most powerful of all consolations ? All the mo-

narchs of the earth, as you truly say, could not soothe your grief ; but religion tells you, your son is happy ; he enjoys bliss supreme, he will enjoy it for ever ! . . . . How gracious, how adorable is the celestial voice that speaks so ravishingly to us ! To that let us listen, and to that only."

Thus did the prudent Amelia strive to soothe the despair of her wretched brother, who, cut off from the affections of the heart, robbed of all worldly hope, and undeceived in the illusions that give a charm to life, had in fact no means of recovering his strength and courage but by the power of religion.

It is only the devout, or very tender hearts, that can be sensible of the insignificance of all the vanities of this world. What are successes, and praises, and pomps, and fortune to

them, compared to the enjoyments of the soul? How ready would they be to sacrifice, without regret, all the frivolous pleasures of society, to be freed from an anxious apprehension respecting the object of their love, or merely to shorten a term of absence! And in grief, what triumph of self-love, or what gratification of ambition could console them, or abstract their thoughts? How does sensibility, in its joys and in its sorrows, open the eyes to the futility of all that it has no concern in! Never did philosophy so excite contempt for imaginary pleasures, or show the littleness and puerility of pride.

At ten o'clock at night, Valmore ceased talking, but continued agitated and groaning: at twelve he suddenly exclaimed: "No, I will not have her blood shed! . . . . That angel,

leaning down from heaven, commands me to prevent her death . . . yet if the Cardinal should forget his promise, in a few hours she dies ! . . .”

At these words, he called for an inkstand, and hastily wrote to the Cardinal, conjuring him, in the most urgent terms, not to forget that he had solemnly promised him Clara's pardon ; and he immediately dispatched a man on horseback to Paris with the letter. While his messenger was gone, Valmore's agitation was such as to increase his fever to a most alarming degree. He was at times delirious : sometimes he thought that he saw Julian, in an angel's form, entreating him to save Clara's life ; at others that he was present at Clara's execution ; then would he tremble and attempt to spring out of

bed, terrifying all about him. At intervals, recollecting himself, he asked if his messenger was returned : in this he was not to be deceived, nor was it attempted, as he would have called for the messenger himself. At length the man returned with a note written by the Cardinal's own hand, informing him in a few lines that Clara had been taken to the scaffold, where she displayed extraordinary courage, that a pardon had been sent to her, and that she was shut up for life in a convent. Valmore now drew breath, and became a little calmer. He had forbidden a word respecting Clara to be mentioned to him on any pretence, and had even said to his sister : " If I should happen to speak to you of her, make me no answer ; hear me in silence, and, above all,

let not that execrable name ever strike my ear : no human power shall ever make me utter it."

A few hours after the arrival of the messenger, he asked several questions relative to Clara's convent, and the manner of treating such as were confined there in consequence of *lettres-de-cachet*. Amelia answered briefly, that when their families paid for their board they had private apartments, but that the rest slept in dormitories, and eat together in refectories. After remaining silent about an hour Valmore again spoke : " Sister," said he, " will you believe me ? . . . I am perfectly in my senses . . . " Here he stopped. He was greatly affected, and for the first time since his misfortune the tone of his voice was gentle and affectionate. Amelia took his hand and pressed it in hers, shed-

ding tears of tenderest sympathy. . . .

"My dear Amelia," continued Valmore after a pause, "*that angel* has appeared to me, it was no illusion, I saw him . . ." Tears interrupted his words . . . . "Yes," resumed he,

"I saw him . . . and I am anxious that you should not doubt it . . ."

"And why," said Amelia, "should I doubt so pleasing a prodigy? Is it not consistent with our belief?"

"I saw him ! . . ." continued Valmore : "He was as beautiful as happy innocence, beaming with a divine joy ! . . . But mind me . . . he uttered with a heavenly sweetness the detested name . . . and he said to me : *You should protect her, defend her, and love her ; . . .*" — "And is not this," said Amelia, "the language of the Gospel? It ought then to be that of angels." — "Protect, and

defend ! . . . these I have done ; but to love her ! Great God ! . . . ” — “ In the immortal abodes of peace, love, and happiness,” observed Amelia, “ those innocent spirits who on earth fell victims to injustice and cruelty, bless the enemies who shortened their term of exile ; and supplicate in their favour that merciful power who has vouchsafed more than once to convert a sinner into a saint, by opening the eyes of vice, which is always blind, and by discovering, in all her splendour, virtue, the daughter of heaven, supported and perfected by religion.”

Amelia went no farther, being careful not to speak of Clara. “ Sister,” said Valmore, “ *that wretch* is certainly forsaken by all the world . . . her board is not paid for perhaps . . . some inquiry should be made . . . ” — “ I will ascertain it,” replied Amelia,



"and act according to your intention : think no more about it." Valmore made no other answer than by pressing his sister's hand. From that moment he appeared to be less agitated ; but he sunk into a state of depression, which in a short time excited fears for his life.

While grief was hurrying Valmore to the tomb, and his physicians, exerting all their skill, were forcing him to struggle painfully with death, the unfortunate Clara was undergoing new trials, which exercised at once her patience and her courage.

It will be remembered, that Clara was carried senseless from the scaffold to the coach, which took her to the monastery of the *Filles du Repentir* : the motion of the carriage brought her to herself, and she found her confessor with her, who informed her

of the place whither she was going. Clara fetched a deep sigh, saying ;  
“ there am I to pass my whole life,  
and I am now but seventeen !”—  
“ My daughter,” said father Arsene,  
“ there is not a being alive who,  
with the full possession of his natural  
strength and intellectual faculties, has  
seen death so near as you have. Keep  
ever in mind the instant when, ready  
to receive the mortal blow, you ad-  
dressed God in so fervent a prayer ;  
death did not only seem inevitable, it  
was come, it had taken hold of you. .  
you stood on the utmost verge of life !  
Your eyes fixed on the sky, must have  
penetrated beyond its veil, and be-  
held heaven and eternity unclouded !  
.... How, then, should those rapid  
moments, which fly on earth, appear  
now to you ! And will you murmur  
at so short a delay ?”—“ Murmur !

ah ! never ; I submit : yet, as God has rejected me from his bosom for many years perhaps, may I not grieve ?"—“ You have shewn all the courage of piety, and it is now God's will that you should also have the merit of patience.”—“ Be you, father, always my guide, and I shall have it.”—“ I will never abandon you ; you are my beloved daughter. I will watch over you to my latest breath.”—“ O my father ! my only support on earth, you alone know the wretched Clara ! . . .” As she said this, her tears gushed down her cheeks. Though still as pious, still as submissive as ever, she was no longer that heroic woman, inaccessible to fear and to every emotion but those of religion. Deprived of the hope of a speedy death, her return to life was not unaccompanied by human

weaknesses : a few minutes before, she thought she was going to enjoy supreme bliss, and immortal glory ; but she had returned to the view of a gloomy futurity, in which she now foresaw only sorrow and ignominy. The more exalted her soul and imagination had been with piety, the more unavoidable was her depression. Dejected, undone, and viewing her reward only at a great distance, her wearied imagination had no longer strength enough to represent it to her in lively colours ; and now surrounded with shame and disgrace, the frightful picture, fixed for a long time before her eyes, seemed to veil from her sight the happy prospect which she had contemplated so near.

She arrived at the monastery at two o'clock in the afternoon. Her heart was rent at parting with Father

Arsene, who, however, promised to come and see her every day.

This house was governed by a prioress, sub-prioress, and four other nuns called in the convents *dignitaries*. The lives of these six persons were irreproachable. If one of them died, she was replaced by a nun from a provincial convent ; but all the other nuns of this house were converted persons, who, after a licentious youth, devoted themselves to penitence. Thus, the branded victims of the passions and of vice, the outcasts of society, were admitted into this asylum : more indulgent than the world, religion received them into her sanctuary ; welcomed them with a tender compassion ; and deigned herself to place upon the unsanctified head of those scandalous sinners the holy veil of modesty and maiden chastity.

There, contrition expiated all ; the repentant sinner might recover all the dignity of virtue, and enjoy all the rights of innocence. In these religious institutions the guilty could not be distinguished, for the austere exercise of penitence was common to all ; and in this refuge of undeceived vice Christian charity interdicted every reproach ; meek humility mingled with repentance, and the most apparent acts of remorse seemed but the fruits of piety. Such was the religious community ; but there was besides, in this house, a great number of pensioners, confined for bad behaviour by *lettres-de-cachet*, and under the care and government of the prioress and of the five *dignitaries*. The women, whose families paid for their board, were provided with retired apartments, all separate from

one another, and saw only the nuns. The others were formed into classes, slept in spacious dormitories, lived in common, eat together, and worked under the inspection of the nuns in various ways. Some were confined for life, and others only for a limited time. The unhappy Clara was disposed of among the classes, and not in a private apartment ! . . . . . She trembled so much, and was so weak, that the two nuns who received her were obliged to carry her into the general room of meeting, into which the pensioners had just returned after dinner. Clara felt an inexpressible sensation of grief, shame, and dread, in casting her eye on these women stained with guilt, and in thinking that she was in future to be their companion . . . . Her deplorable history was already known, and from

the murmur that was heard throughout the room, as well as from the insulting look on every face, she easily collected that she excited, if possible, still greater horror than she felt herself. She was placed on a chair, a nun sat by her, and gave her vinegar to smell. Terrified and overpowered, she could neither hold up her head nor utter a single word. In a few minutes a bason of soup was brought to her; which she took; and being asked if she wanted any thing to eat, she made a sign that she wished to lie down: on which she was immediately conducted to the dormitory. The prioress, on whose arm she leaned, seeing her start at sight of the multitude of beds in the place, said to her in the mildest manner: " You need never fear any thing here, it being well known,



that any insult would be severely punished; the situation you are in demands all my care, and there is not any which I am not ready to give you." Clara's only reply was a sorrowful and affecting look, which completely gained the affection of the good nun, already greatly moved by her very appearance.

When Clara was in bed, the prioress sat down at the side of it, saying to her: "Try to compose yourself; I will sit here till you fall asleep, after which I will send a lay-sister to stay by you, and wait upon you; and whenever you wish to speak to me, send for me and I will come immediately."

Clara, who had not had a wink of sleep for two days, was soon overcome by excessive drowsiness, and forgetting herself enjoyed for some

hours the sweet and sound repose of youth and innocence. She did not wake till half past eight at night, nor would she have waked then but for the noise made by the women coming into the dormitory to go to bed. Clara carefully drew her curtains close that she might see nobody. She was extremely uneasy at the idea of passing the whole night in the midst of all these women. She heard the voice of the prioress who read prayers aloud. Clara kneeling in her bed attended to her. She continued reading for a considerable time, and the voice of a respectable woman assuaged a little the bitterness of her reflections; she thought that in this great number of persons banished from society, there must surely be several captivated by religion, and perhaps some innocent, condemned on

false appearances. This idea softened her, and rendered the shocking association less insupportable to her. After prayers the women all went to bed in profound silence, the lamps were lighted, and Clara again fell asleep. At midnight she was suddenly awakened by a strange noise; she listened, and heard at her bed-side a low voice abusing her in the accents of rage, and in terms most atrocious; at the same instant her curtain was drawn open, and a menacing figure appeared clenching her hand at her. Clara gazed, and in this Fury recollected the governess of the unfortunate Julian, who had been sent to the convent for life, as a punishment for the criminal intercourse which had prevented her taking care of him. Clara, terrified not only by the act, but by the very sight of this

wretch, threw herself violently on the floor, on the opposite side of the bed, with a piercing cry. The lay-sisters on watch rose hastily ; but when they came up to the spot they only found Clara out of bed, who, unwilling to accuse the creature who had insulted her, merely said that she thought she heard a dreadful noise. She begged one of the sisters to put her bed near hers ; to which the sister consented, and Clara again lay down. But the idea of the young woman, which so strongly brought to her mind that of the unfortunate Julián, deprived her of rest for the remainder of the night. Hitherto the thoughts of her trial and of death, and the warmth of her piety, had kept every other object from her imagination ; but condemned to live in a house devoted to ignominy, all her former painful ideas re-

turned to her remembrance. Valmore appeared to her in points of view at once terrible and affecting; she saw that he was to be pitied both for the pangs attendant on his resentment, and those which mingled with his tenderer regrets. "Unfortunate man!" said she to herself, "he is compelled to hate me as long as he lives, whereas I may admire him ever, and love him still! . . . He has one pang, then, which I have not felt, that of a rapid transition from tenderness to hatred! My heart has not been overwhelmed by so shocking, so inconceivable a revolution! . . . There is one sorrow which Heaven has vouchsafed to spare me! But it is felt by Valmore. Can it then be unfelt by me? Oh! never, in spite of the evidence and illusion of the strongest appearances, never could I

have been made to believe him capable of a crime! . . . Yet not a moment did he hesitate to condemn me! . . . Alas! the terror, the wildness painted on my face, my own words, the sight of his murdered boy, his despair, all in those first moments of horror, must have conspired to deceive him! . . . Ah! had he heard my examination, had he seen me then, might he not have been convinced of my innocence, as well as that stranger, that judge, whom the depositions and pretended proofs could not deceive? . . . And now, if reflection does not completely convince him, will it not at least raise some doubts in his mind? When he thinks of the unfortunate Clara, when he remembers her education, her life, her conversations, her tenderness, will it be possible that he should con-

tinue in his horrible error? . . . . Yes, yes, he will abhor me as long as he lives! . . . . He saved me, indeed, from the cruelty of the furious mob at the Castle, at the moment they were about to tear me to pieces; he too, I have no doubt, snatched me from the scaffold; nor ~~do~~ I imagine that he took any part in fixing my place here, in these classes composed of the most abject of vicious women. No, had it depended upon him I should have had a decent, and consequently separate place of confinement. His generosity I know will never vary; but neither will his hatred! . . . .” These painful thoughts occupied Clara the whole night through. At six o’clock the bell rang, and she rose with the rest of the women. She now experienced a new humiliation; she was made to

dress herself in the uniform of the class, consisting of coarse linen, and a gown of grey woollen stuff. When thus habited in the livery of infamy, she thought herself contaminated, like those by whom it was justly worn, and with whom she was externally put upon a footing. After a penitent's breakfast, bread and water, which the want of nourishment made her swallow, she attended the prioress and sub-prioress, who placed her at the work-table, and giving her her task, mildly desired her to do it. The prioress then went out, leaving the sub-prioress to superintend the work. Clara, sinking under the weight of shame, did not dare to move, or lift up her eyes; she was in that kind of stupor and confusion which rendered the testimony of conscience of no use. Seated be-



tween two women of the town, she dreaded meeting their bold looks, or even touching their clothes; she sat in her place without moving, holding her head down: her hands under the table folded her gown tight about her body, her only care being to preserve a little space between her and her worthless associates. As she was doing this, one of the women suddenly caught hold of one of her hands under the table: had a red hot iron been applied to that pure hand, the touch of it could not have been more painful and terrible. She started up with a look so expressive and affecting that it went to the heart of the nun. She had seen the motion, and guessed the cause of that mechanical horror produced by the antipathy that will ever exist between effrontery and modesty. The nun

standing up, and holding Clara by the arm, gave the woman a severe look. " You know," said she to her, " that all familiarity is forbidden here, and that playfulness would be misplaced. We are here, as it should be everywhere else on this land of banishment, which is but a gloomy passage, to lament for our past errors, and to sanctify the present in constantly rendering it useful by prayer and work."

This nun, who spoke with such sweetness, was, while she assimilated herself to infamous women, a pure and holy virgin; but this language of Christian charity, so elegant and so sublime, was in her mouth both humble and sincere. Thus did she daily, in the privacy of her cell, speak of herself to God.

After giving the reprimand, Mother Saint-Anne (for that was the

sub-prioress's name) turning to Clara, asked her if she could embroider, and upon her answering that she could, had a frame brought in. Clara immediately set to work, placing her frame in such a manner as to keep her back towards all the other women. They worked in profound silence for near an hour, when Mother Saint-Anne was called out. As she went, she said she should be back presently. Two lay-sisters remained in the hall. In a few minutes Clara was startled by bursts of laughter; a noise so discordant to her ear, appeared to her at once insult, cruelty, and the height of indecency. She had before her eyes the most hideous sight on earth; vice under disgrace without shame or remorse. She felt a sudden shock, which yielded to a shower of tears: the sisters commanded silence, and

Mother Saint-Anne returning, order was restored.

At noon the women rose to go to the refectory. Clara, hardly able to support herself, her head still hanging down, suffered every one to go before her, wishing to be the last, that she might be more at liberty in walking, and have nobody behind her. But the nun making her a sign to go on, she obeyed, and was obliged to fall into the row. As they were entering the refectory, they crowded one against another, and in the disorder a woman putting her mouth to Clara's ear, said to her rapidly in a low voice: "We have only weaknesses to reproach ourselves with; you have committed a horrible crime: we are all combined against you, and you will either be stabbed or poisoned.".... Clara knew it to be the

voice of Julian's governess, and shuddered; she would have fled, but a robust and furious hand held her strongly back by her gown, till she had heard every word. Being then allowed to go, she ran forward into the hall; when leaning on the back of a chair, she stood petrified with terror. The pensioners went up and surrounded her; to have seen her amidst these women, who had all a free, easy air, one might have thought, by the paleness of her face, and by her dejected and abashed appearance, that she was the only guilty person present, if the virgin modesty diffused over her whole person had not given to her angelic countenance the air of afflicted virtue, and not that of confusion.

Mother Saint-Anne flew to assist Clara, who told her that she had been

afraid she was going to be ill, but that she felt herself better. They now sat down to table. Clara found herself placed opposite to her enemy: once their eyes met, but from that moment she fixed hers on her plate till dinner was over. Clara, who had looked death in the face so heroically, was lost in the dread of vice and of audacity; she possessed incomparable courage in all the situations that required greatness of soul, but she was a very woman in every other. Whatever excited great thoughts raised her above herself; but when there was nothing to affect her heart and warm her imagination, she was the feeblest and most timid of all creatures.

During dinner she had the comfort of hearing the sweet voice of Mother Saint-Anne, who read aloud a pious lecture. That delightful voice, ar-

ticulating only holy words, impressed on the ear and on the mind the sweetness and the idea of the most pleasing harmony : it suspended the griefs and terrors of Clara.

After dinner the pensioners were permitted to walk for an hour in the courts, but Clara made no use of the permission ; she returned to the hall, and there took breath ; she was alone with a sister, who staid with her, and she resumed her work. At the moment that the pensioners were entering, she was informed that Father Arsene was come to visit her : that worthy monk was one of the best preachers of those times ; the nuns revered him, and Clara was permitted to go alone to the parlour to receive his visit. When Father Arsene saw Clara in the dress of the women confined in common in that house,

he was hurt: he looked at her at first without speaking, his eyes swimming in tears, but a moment's reflection restored his serenity. A sight like this could not but have roused indignation and sorrow in bosoms ruled by human wisdom, but religion has comforts for every situation in life. And who can doubt that to be the true wisdom which gives courage, which strengthens and consoles? .

"My daughter," said the monk, "I see you in the livery of shame and want; and, while you are wearing it, what a prodigious number of depraved women are living in pomp and grandeur! . . . God teaches us to despise perishable goods, which he so rarely bestows on those whom he loves, and which he never does bestow upon them as a reward, for they are only burdens or trials. My



child, prize that dress ; it renders you interesting in the eyes of God ! . . . . How lovely to wear it with a soul pure and resigned ! . . . , ” — “ Alas ! father,” replied Clara, “ you mistake my oppression for resignation. I do not murmur, but I am cast down ! . . . ” Here she told all that had happened to her, and poured her griefs into the bosom of her venerable friend. “ You have no relations,” said Father Arsene, “ your inhuman father has abandoned you : but, besides, his affairs are in a bad state, and he has so many creditors that any allowance made by him would be opposed, so that if he had even been inclined to make one, it would have been to no purpose, and you would still have been reduced to the necessity of taking refuge in the common class supported by the government. But there is

a means remaining to rescue you from this disgraceful and threatening society, and to place you in safety in this very convent, in the interior part belonging to the nuns. The diamond which you put into my hands is still yours : I have had it valued, and it is worth twelve thousand livres ; it belongs to you, having been sent to you directly from Germany six weeks ago, and even without your father's knowledge. I will sell it to-day ; you shall pay for your board, and sleep this very night in a private room." Clara reflected a moment, then addressing Arsene ; " No, father," said she, " no, that diamond is no longer mine. I disposed of it in my way to the scaffold : I promised God to give it to the poor ; it was my testament, which it is not now in my power to revoke. Am I not

dead in law? My testimony would not be received in a court of justice; my signature is a nullity; Clara is no longer in existence. Let at least the little good she has been able to do survive her! Keep the diamond; we will sell it to accomplish the first good work you shall point out.”—  
“ My dear child, you gave the diamond only because you believed that you were going to die. You continue in life, and it is now your only resource; you may therefore, without scruple, make use of it.”—“ No, my father, I would rather remain constantly in my present situation: I shall be supported in it by the remembrance of this action. Alas! it is the only one of the kind I shall ever be able to do; and ought I to let it escape?”—“ It is not for me to advise it, but it touches my heart

and edifies me. As for the bracelet which was given to you by Valmore, it must still be returned ; you ought not to keep the picture of a man no longer destined to be your husband."

—" Yet, father, I took an oath to wear that bracelet as long as I lived."

—" True, but that was when you had no doubt that Valmore was to receive your hand in a few days. . . "

—" Oh ! I had, indeed, no doubt of it," cried Clara, in a tone of anguish : " six days are not yet passed since I could see in futurity nothing but happiness, . . . tranquillity ! . . . Valmore esteemed me, loved me, . . . and now, Great God ! . . . " Tears prevented her proceeding. Father Arsene showed no ill-timed severity ; he never preached uselessly ; he obeyed the divine precept, given by the great Comforter, *Weep with those that weep,*

and the tears of Clara flowed with less bitterness. "Father," said she, "You are right in this as in all else. ....Send back the bracelet..."—  
"And do you, my daughter," replied Father Arsene, "as much as the weakness of human nature will allow you, banish from your imagination thoughts that oppress you. Look into your conscience; you will there find noble consolations. Amidst your apparent degradation, consider, my child, the wonderful height of your destiny: you are not the sport of events, you do not endure as a slave; when you were declared guilty, it depended only upon you to clear yourself; you were conducted to the scaffold, but a word from you would have prevented your going thither; you are now in the vilest society, in the most humiliating

abode, but without being compelled to betray your secret ; you may, if you please, quit it this very night, but a noble free-will locks you up in it. Thus, every one of your misfortunes developes in you a virtuous feeling. You are not drawn into this abyss of human miseries by an invincible necessity ; it is your soul that still directs all, and, placing you in the presence of God, impels you to sacrifice every thing to the desire of pleasing him ; it is your soul that shows you a glory which never fades ; it is your soul, in short, to which you are indebted for this sweet resignation, and which will give you a pious perseverance. . . . .

Beloved child, whom I ever carry in my heart ! Take courage ! I feel when you suffer, and yet I can see you only triumphing. Remember

that the noble victim of virtue should not grieve or complain."—" Well ! my father," cried Clara, " I will render myself worthy of your kindness ; I will overcome all my weaknesses." She was still speaking when a sister entered the parlour to tell her that the prioress wanted her. Clara, strengthened by the paternal discourses of the pious Arsene, immediately left him to go to the prioress. She was astonished to find that she was not carried back to the class, but shown to the apartments of the nuns. When she arrived at the prioress's room, she had a much greater subject of surprise. The prioress having made her sit down : " I am happy to inform you," said she to her, " that you are not to go again into the hospital : you are to quit that dress, and put on your usual clothes, which have

been just sent here." At these words Clara could not restrain her tears, thinking that the clothes came from Valmore Castle, where she had left them. "And here, likewise," continued the prioress, "is the casket which contains your jewels and trinkets . . . . These are only restitutions of your own things . . . . Another hand, that chuses not to be known, has undertaken to pay your board ; a notary has just brought me the deed." "Ah ! never doubt it," cried Clara, interrupting the prioress, and bursting into tears, "it is still the same hand. . . ."—"Be that as it may," resumed the prioress, "it is not in your power to refuse this pension ; I have a right to accept it for you, I have made use of that right, and signed the deed. They are getting your apartment ready, and you will



be settled in it in the course of an hour. A lay sister will lodge with you, in order to wait upon you ; your victuals, which must be cooked separately, will be brought to you ; you will be furnished for your embroidery with the stuffs, worsteds, and silks you may wish to have. You are not to work any more for the benefit of the house ; whatever you do will belong to yourself ; in short, you shall want nothing that you can reasonably wish for in this retreat. The six nuns, including myself, who are charged with the government of this house, will come and see you by turns, whenever you are inclined to receive us. The rest pay no visits ; they are entirely devoted to the interior service of the community. With respect to the small number of boarders, who have rooms in our

part of the house, you may see them if you please."—"No, madam," replied Clara, "I devote myself to absolute solitude, and desire to see here only you and the sub-prioress. Besides," continued she, "it is Christian charity alone that can induce any one to support the sight of an unfortunate being, who was condemned to death for an unheard-of crime. . . ." She paused, seeing the nun shudder. "And yet, madam, resumed she, in a low and tremulous accent, I asserted my innocence to the very scaffold . . . and while I live it is the language I will hold, humbly, no doubt, for I know I shall not be believed . . . but it is the language of truth." "Attend," said the prioress; "we never suffer any person confined here to speak of their misfortunes to us; such accounts, or complaints, only

might lead to dissimulation : therefore never speak to me of your sad misfortune ; I do not wish to know it. But, in refusing to hear you, I do not judge you ; I have no right to condemn, and no power to absolve you. To pity, to take care of you, and to love you, it is enough that I have seen your tears flow, and that I know you are unhappy.” —“ Oh !” cried Clara, “ your compassion is so sweet and so noble, that it may be substituted for friendship ; it has, at least, all the charm of it. ” But,” continued she, “ it was not my intention to relate my deplorable story to you ; what I ventured to say is all I meant to state, and it is a great comfort to me to think you have heard it. In future I will preserve the silence you enjoin.” Here the prioress rose and conducted her to her apartments,

which consisted of three pretty little rooms, furnished simply, but with an extreme attention to cleanliness! The windows looked into a large garden, the full use of which was offered to Clara. The prioress then left her, and Clara enjoyed the pleasure of being alone. God was there; and she could speak to him, and hear him, without having her attention drawn off. . . . Providence, by the means of Valmore, had now snatched her from the hospital at the very instant she had courageously decided upon remaining there. Why did she view in this solitude, become so peaceful, only days of wretchedness? Is there a situation in life which God cannot brighten? Had she not already experienced, that it was possible to expect death with a delightful calm, and to feel in that situation, and

even on the very scaffold, all the transports, all the raptures of the liveliest and purest joy. After such wonders, what bounties of the sovereign power could in future surprise her? Why should she reject the hope of an unexpected change in her lot? God, perhaps, had prepared for her legal means of justification; perhaps she had been put to this terrible trial only for the purpose of one day, even in this life, producing a brilliant triumph for innocence! But were she destined to go to her grave, mistaken and abhorred by men, is not God all-sufficient to a faithful heart which gives itself up to him without reserve?

Such were the thoughts of Clara; and it is thus that Religion answers all: it is thus that she gives, even for this life, boundless hopes, and at the

same time teaches us to be contented without them, or to lose them without murmuring and despair. What scheme invented by man would have this powerful influence over our feelings, our conduct, and our lot? Were we, in Clara's place, to suppose a philosophical heroine, possessed of a proud intellect, but not of religious faith, her story would be already finished; suicide would have anticipated her condemnation. When we would paint virtue, then, struggling with patience and unshaken courage against a dreadful misfortune, we must choose a Christian heroine. And what more useful, what nobler picture can be offered to the admiration of great souls?..... To such, a sketch of this nature, however imperfect, cannot be uninteresting.



Clara wished for the next day, anxious to see Father Arsene. She knew that he would be delighted with the change in her situation, and that he would bless Providence for it.

For some days Clara staid but little in her room. She was still incapable of the slightest application, and could only pray and walk. Whenever she attempted to work, the most agonizing thoughts came into her mind. The dreadful remembrance of her father filled her with terror; his wickedness appeared to her a reproach, which in her opinion justified all the humiliations she was made to suffer: when she recalled to her imagination his savage countenance, she constantly saw him seizing on Julian, and plunging a dagger into his heart; the innocent little fellow bathed in his blood, and Valmore dis-

tracted. . . Her imagination was often disturbed by this horrid picture ; at which times she would rise terrified and call for help, crying out : " Shall I for ever see this innocent blood ; this blood that falls on me ? . . ." This wildness, these terrors, bore so strong a resemblance to remorse, and to an unambiguous testimony of the crime, that the nuns, who were present at these fits of agitation, were confirmed in an error, which, but for these involuntary emotions, Clara might have easily removed by the charm of her countenance, by her mildness, and especially by her piety.

She spent almost every day in the church and in the garden ; she loved to walk alone in the evening through the latter, which was full of memorials of an affecting piety. No profane ornament was used to adorn this



solitude ; no noise but the singing of birds and the murmuring of a fountain interrupted its tranquillity. Clara contemplated with feeling this solitary spot, situated in the heart of a great town, amidst the depravation and frantic joys of the world ; a sacred temple of mercy opened to repentance, inaccessible to vain curiosity. She saw the recluses under long black veils, like silent and melancholy shades, moving singly and slowly beneath verdant cloisters ; for in this monastery, the nuns, devoted to penitence, had not that free communication with one another, that in other convents presents a picture, the simplicity, innocence, and gaiety of which incessantly recal the delightful days of infancy. " Here," said Clara, " all recollections are regrets ; tears and groans are the portion of the

inhabitants ; but then the troubled conscience gains peace, and the pangs of remorse are changed into love !

. . . . Religion, every where so beautiful, is here particularly admirable . . .

Here, she purifies hearts that have been led astray ; revives in souls debased all the feelings of delicacy ; extinguishes the destructive fire of the passions ; rekindles the noble flame of virtue ! These humble penitents, rescued from the shameful bonds of vice, are surely happy ; how much should they love the God who pardons ! In this abode, particularly, is found all that can best excite admiration and touch the heart ; supreme power and mercy, weakness and gratitude.

One morning Clara wanted some flowers to dress a chapel, and as there were none in the garden, a servant

was sent out to purchase them. On her return, she went to the hall of the class, where she put down her basket, and forgot it for an hour. The pensioners knew that the flowers were for Clara ; and Julian's governess found an opportunity to slip a small bit of paper into the basket unseen. The servant afterwards came for it, and carried it to Clara, who, in putting the flowers into pots, found a note at the bottom of the basket, and opening it, read these words : "*Valmore is dying ! . . . . . Murderess of his son, you are the cause of his death ! . . . .*" The paper fell from her hands, her eyes closed, and she fainted. When she came to herself, the first thing she did was to throw herself upon her knees, shedding a flood of tears. She supplicated the Almighty to spare Valmore's life, and

after praying an hour, rose crying :  
“ He *will* live ! ” . . . . . This prophe-  
tic confidence of fervour and faith  
was not deceived.

Valmore, in fact, had been given-  
over, but a fortunate crisis took place,  
and his life was saved. His conva-  
lescence was long and lingering : at  
the end of three days, he rose, still ill,  
to go and look at the men, who, by  
his order, were working at Julian’s  
tomb.

Valmore could never bear the  
thought of succeeding to the rights  
of his son, of the idolized boy, whom  
he had lost in so tragical a manner.  
Resolving not to marry again, he in-  
formed his sister that it was his inten-  
tion to consecrate the lands and reve-  
nues of his magnificent estate to a  
charitable institution. Amelia, who  
knew the firmness of his resolutions,

never thought of diverting him from his design, but was rather inclined to take a share in the pious act. It was settled that two hundred poor children should be established in the castle, converted into an hospital. Amelia declared she would take upon herself the charge of superintending them, and spend the remainder of her life on the spot. The children were to be divided into classes, and admitted from the age of one year to five : they were to be kept till ten, and then apprenticed, or put out some other way. The sum produced by the sale of the superb furniture of the castle was to defray the first expenses of the establishment. The great court of the castle, in which the remains of Julian were deposited, was consecrated. His tomb was of white marble, and constructed to hold also the

ashes of Valmore and Amelia. It was surrounded by an iron-railing gilt, and two rows of cypresses; and on one of the tablets was the following inscription addressed to the children who were to live in the castle :

He had the virtues of his age.

He was pious, tractable, and grateful.

Children, follow his example ;

You enjoy what he ought to have had on earth.

Honour his memory :

From heaven on high he will watch over you.

On the night following the day on which the body of Julian was solemnly deposited in his tomb, Valmore determined to sit up later than usual, and ordered all his domestics to go to bed. Being alone in his study with his sister, he sat down ~~by her~~ side, and looking at her in silence for some minutes, was struck and affected at her paleness, and at the

change in her countenance. "How you must have suffered!" said he to her. "Yes," replied Amelia, "I always suffer doubly! . . ."—"O my sister," said Valmore, "my only friend! . . . I am not ungrateful! . . . Come, I will discharge my obligation." Saying which he rose, took her by the hand, and going out of his study with her, led her to the great court, where the ashes of his son reposed. Amelia, much affected, asked him in vain what he was going to do. He was greatly agitated, but for the first time since his illness his step was firm and rapid; the sublime spring of an ardent and feeling soul restored vigour and life to his debilitated frame. Having reached Julian's tomb, he opened the gate, and kneeling on the steps of the monument: "Oh my son," cried:

he, " I swear on your tomb to devote my whole life to virtue ! and in this I bind myself to live to gratitude and sacred friendship ! . . . Here I lay down my hatred, and the resentment which rends my heart ! . . . Here I renounce the vain and frivolous hope of a treacherous and fleeting happiness ; all my visions of felicity are vanished for ever ! . . . . But since the illusions that charmed me are fled, I will boldly put an end to the painful dream of life, and when any horrid image in spite of me forces its way to my mind, I solemnly vow to chase it out by some generous action, that at least a sorrow so natural may produce only happy effects ; and I shall thus immortalize my pangs and your memory."

Amelia here threw herself into her brother's arms, and they mingled



their tears: Valmore pressed his sister warmly to his breast, and felt at that instant that the source of the sweetest and purest emotions was not exhausted in his heart.

From that day, though his melancholy was so deeply rooted that it seemed the effect of constitution, he betrayed no more despondence, attended to his affairs, and drew out himself the plan of the establishment he had projected: the castle was filled with workmen, and the grant, made with all the forms necessary to render it irrevocable, was signed.

These employments consoled not Valmore, but they bound him again to life: it is possible, theoretically, to project doing good solely on principles, and by calculation; but the doing it is ever attended with delight;

so that the man constantly engaged in beneficent actions, is never completely wretched.

Valmore, however, could not banish from his imagination the remembrance of Clara : in spite of all his resolutions he frequently spoke of her to his sister, who never made him a reply. After a thousand reflections on the horrid event, he at length concluded that passion and unbridled jealousy had instigated Clara to the commission of this incomprehensible crime : " She is barbarous, she is atrocious," said he, " but the lust of wealth is unknown to her : all, all demonstrated in her, disinterestedness and elevation of soul. . . . Alas ! did I not likewise see in her, candour and goodness ! . . . Great God ! how passionately did I covet her love ! and, oh ! that my pursuit of it should

lead to the death of my boy ! that an affection so pure should have inspired a passion so ferocious ! . . . . Could I but remember, before that horrible period, one censurable action, one blameable word ! . . . . No, oh no ! till then an angel, and all at once a fury, a monster ! My reason fails me at this thought as at that of hell : I believe, and tremble, but cannot comprehend ! . . . .” Valmore in speaking thus, frequently shed bitter tears, then, reproaching himself for those moments of weakness, swore again never to mention Clara, and hurried from his sister : with no other person was he ever tempted to talk of his sorrow.

Meanwhile, Clara in her retirement learned that Valmore was out of danger ; and, inquiring daily for him, she was informed gradually by father Ar-

sene of the progress of his convalescence, and of the beneficent transformation of Valmore Castle. This account deeply affected Clara, but did not surprise her. "Unfortunate father!" said she, "so worthy of a better lot! . . . . Having lost his son, the first thought suggested by his grief was to collect unfortunate orphans! . . . . What pleasure would it give me to share the noble cares of the virtuous Amelia! . . . . Yet, while fancy is constantly transporting me to the place where she lives, while I weep in sympathy with her, and while I partake all her troubles and all her feelings, I am an object of execration to her! . . . . In that abode, where hapless virtue finds all its consolations in itself, I am cursed, I am abhorred! . . . . But fortune has strove in vain to break the ties which

unite us; these loved bonds of so sweet a sympathy are, as to me, unimpaired: they may be neglected but cannot be broken. Could the father and aunt of our Julian but see me, could I but make them hear me! . . . Yes, without revealing my horrid secret, I should convince their hearts! . . . it is only in striving to forget me that they can persist in their sad error. In the castle consecrated to virtue, whatever might bring me to recollection has no doubt been destroyed: my picture is torn to pieces, my chamber demolished, the flowers I planted rooted up, the trees that had my initials on them cut down! Nothing of me remains around them!"

These thoughts were daggers to the heart of Clara: she had resolved to keep all remembrance of Valmore from her mind; she thought she did

a great deal in never mentioning his name, and in endeavouring to think only of Annarella; and when she put questions to father Arsene she spoke to him only of her, and of the new establishment, upon which she was to provide. Thus, her secret affection, in becoming still more reserved and more scrupulous, was strengthened by the very care she took to concentrate and bury it at the bottom of her soul.

One day, father Arsene told her, that in the place of the little pavilion where Julian lost his life a chapel had been erected, and consecrated to the invocation of angels. Clara had, for a month past, been embroidering a superb altar-curtain which was almost finished, and she anxiously wished that this, her best piece of work, might serve to decorate that

chapel. She had sold the diamond which she had entrusted to father Arsene, and with some of the money arising from it had given small pensions to several unfortunate persons; in the number of whom there was a poor widow, with whom she had been made acquainted by a lay sister. She commissioned this woman, under a promise of strict secrecy, to carry her work to Valmore Castle, and to offer it to Amelia, at a price much below its value. The commission was executed with skill and fidelity. Amelia bought the curtain, which was immediately hung up before the altar of the *Chapel of Angels*. The poor woman was rewarded by a gift of the money she brought back.

This homage to the memory of Julian afforded Clara some consolatory moments: she was delighted to

think that this chapel owed its greatest ornament to her work, and that Valmore would every day look at it.

Clara had now been above two months in this convent, where she passed her time in perfect solitude, receiving in her apartments only the prioress and mother Saint-Anne whom she edified by her conduct. She worked unceasingly for the church and the poor. She had no intercourse with the women shut up in the convent and pensioned by their families. These showed towards Clara, whose story was so public and so well known, an aversion and horror which it was natural to feel, but the expression of which at least ought to have been restrained by her sufferings. On the contrary, these women marked their aversion in the



most indecent and cruel manner. They seemed charmed to have an occasion to look down with contempt upon another: this is an enjoyment to vice, which thinks it rises above its own abject state by exercising barbarously the sad right of despising. These women, not satisfied with affectedly shunning Clara, when they met her in the cloisters or in the garden, formally refused at church to admit her into the gallery appropriated to all of them. The prioress, who saw what was passing, left the choir, where she had already taken her seat, and went up to Clara, whom she found trembling. She led her into the body of the church, and placed her between herself and the sub-prioress, a distinction which no pensioner had ever before obtained. "This," said she to

Clara, " shall in future be your place; when it is requisite to protect you from unjust oppression. I do not think that I can fix you too near myself; for it is my part to be your support: would that it depended also upon me to be your comforter!"

After divine service the prioress, accompanied by the five nuns dignitaries, placed herself in a hall through which all the pensioners must pass in leaving the gallery, and there stopping them, thus addressed them.

" Ladies, allow me to observe to you, that you have no right to exclude any pensioner from the gallery of our church, while there is room enough in it. We might, if we pleased, find a place in it for the person whom you unjustly kept out, but we prefer her being with us; and we only wish to apprise you that we

shall always take upon ourselves to make her amends for whatever insults she receives from you, and that every humiliation you make her feel will call from us some distinction in her favour."

This speech produced more pacific dispositions, and Clara was no longer insulted. She was so affected by the goodness of the prioress and mother Saint-Anne, that she had an idea of becoming a nun in that convent. She spoke of it to father Arsène, who dissuaded her from it. "This," said he, "would be allowing that you are criminal, and you ought never to accuse yourself falsely: reflect, that in the monastery of the *Filles du Repentir* guilty persons only are received; this institution is not for you."—"Alas!" replied Clara, "no other convent will receive me!"—"Well! my daugh-

ter, it is not God's will to place you in this state of life." She gave up her design, but not without great regret.

One evening, about six o'clock, Clara was very much surprised at a visit from the prioress, who never used to come to her so late. "I come," said the prioress, "to bring you good news." These words, which conveyed the idea of a change of situation, only made her uneasy; for she looked not for happiness again on earth. She stood speechless: a violent beating of the heart prevented her replying. . . . "You are going to be set at liberty," continued the prioress; "I have received an order to that effect signed by the minister." . . . —"Oh, heaven! . . . who has applied for the order?" —"Your father." At these words Clara was

ready to sink. "He has obtained permission," said the prioress, "to remove you to a seat belonging to him three hundred miles off, on the banks of the Rhine : he has engaged that you shall not go from it ; but you will be in a fine country, and in the custody of a father. . . ." Clara heard no more ; a deadly paleness overspread her face, her eyes closed, and she became senseless. The prioress imagined joy to be the cause of this emotion, till the unfortunate Clara, coming to herself, said to her wildly : " Well, but madam, cannot I insist on staying here ? Can any one drag me hence against my will ? " . . . " How you astonish me ! " replied the prioress. " Are you not sensible that a father's house is an honourable asylum, and that, after what you have already suffered, you

have nothing to fear from the severity of a parent? . . . . However, you have no choice; it is an order we have received, and it must be obeyed. . . .”

“ Oh, my God !” exclaimed Clara, clasping her hands together . . . “ and when am I to go? . . . .”—“ This very night, and presently.”—“ Gracious heaven ! . . . . and shall I not be able to speak with Father Arsene? ” . . . . “ He is gone from home, and does not return till to-morrow. . . .”—

“ Will you have the goodness, madam, to take charge of a note for him? ”—“ Certainly.”

Clara immediately wrote as follows :

“ Oh ! my father, my only protector, they are dragging me away; they are going to carry me to a great distance from you, to Rosmal Castle, on the banks of the Rhone.

" Oh ! do not forsake your unhappy  
" Clara."

Having sealed this note she gave it to the prioress ; and in about half an hour she was informed that a carriage with post-horses was waiting for her at the gate of the convent. Trembling and dismayed, she had not courage enough to ask whether her father was in the carriage ; she could not utter his name ; and the title that was given to him her whole heart disavowed. She was told accidentally that business detained her father in Paris, but that he would soon follow her : on which she recovered a little strength, and throwing herself into the arms of the prioress : " Oh ! my mother," cried she, " why might I not have passed my sad days under your direction ? . . . Suffer me, now that I cannot have the slightest inte-

rest in deceiving you, to repeat to you, that I am innocent ! . . . .” — “ Oh !” said the prioress quite melted, “ who can look at you and think you guilty ? My remembrance of you will never be accompanied with any other idea than that of the most pitiable misfortune. . . . .” — “ Adieu, my mother,” said Clara, melting into tears ; “ pray for me ! . . . .” At these words she tore herself from her arms, and ran out of the room. It was now the middle of October : the clock struck eight ; Clara started at the sound. “ How gloomy to me,” cried she, “ will all the hours be that are to follow this ! . . . .” Passing through the cloister, which was lighted by a lamp, she stopped as she cast her eye on the cemetery. “ I did hope,” said she, “ that my ashes would have rested there ; and now . .



who knows. . . ?" She shuddered; but did not finish the sentence; she thought that the waters of the Rhone would perhaps supply the place of sepulture. . . . She leaned against a stone pillar, and seeing through the arcades a pure and cloudless sky, the horror of her thoughts yielded to the sight of it. "Oh, my God!" said she, "into whatever hands we fall, are we not always in Thine? Dispose of me according to thy pleasure; terrors are a kind of rebellion against thy will; teach me to conquer mine." . . . . As she said this, she proceeded with a quick pace. When she came to the gate of the convent, she felt a pang at quitting this house of sorrows consecrated to contrition; her tears began again to flow: she was helped into the carriage, unable to support herself.

Montalban, having determined to reside in a foreign country, to escape from his creditors, wished previously to make himself master of the unfortunate Clara, as he continued to live in dread, that she would one day or other reveal the truth; particularly when she learned that he had quitted France. It was with difficulty he had obtained the minister's order, which he had solicited privately; and at the time when Clara was delivered up to him, he might remain a month longer in France without the danger of being arrested. Several of his debts were actually due; but they consisted of securities in which only his property was made liable: the notes which affected his person did not fall due till towards the end of November of that year. The minister had applied for his daughter with

no other view than to sacrifice her!  
.... All his servants were new ones;  
the keeper of Rosmal Castle only  
excepted. This man had formerly  
been in his service in Germany; he  
could not speak a word of French,  
and had been placed about a year in  
this mansion with an Alsatian woman-  
servant, who acted as an interpreter  
for him. Montalban believing him  
to be incapable of a crime, and being  
at the same time resolved not to trust  
any body, had put no confidence  
whatever in him. He had sent for  
him to Paris, and having made him  
acquainted with the sentence which  
had been passed upon Clara, charged  
him to take her to Rosmal, and guard  
her there. Knowing the man to be  
very mercenary, he authorized him  
to consider as his own, and to take,  
whatever money and jewels Clara

might have in her possession : a precaution, by which he deprived her of all means of gaining her jailer. But Clara took with her only her clothes and a few pieces of gold ; her money, and all that she had of value, she had put into the hands of her confessor. Montalban, kept by some business at Paris, made sure of his victim, and lost no time in sending her to his estate, to stay there till he could go and get rid of her by the means of poison.

Clara, seated in a travelling carriage, with a man on horseback at the door, proceeded rapidly. The beauty of the night, and the brilliancy of the moon, created a strong sensation in her mind, which gave a sad impression to the unconquerable dread she felt. Horrid, foreboding fears froze her imagination, and the

vague ideas that presented themselves to her, served but to augment her terrors. Courage can only be exercised when the danger to be encountered is known : there is no contending against perils, the nature and particulars of which are concealed ; and perhaps cowardice is nothing more than that weakness which keeps the mind from closely viewing the dreaded object. Many have madly plunged into an abyss to avoid seeing it ; but whoever determines to look steadfastly at it, either discovers means to escape, or becomes resigned.

At day-break the travellers stopped to change horses : they saw before them an immense gloomy forest, to which the road led. Clara contemplated with dread the prodigious extent of the wood ; and it came into

her imagination that she was perhaps destined to be murdered beneath the thick foliage of those trees, through which the light of day could scarcely penetrate. . . . At that moment, while her German attendant was helping to put the horses to the carriage, a poor woman, with two little children in her arms, went up to her and begged charity. Clara started at the voice, and looking at the woman, thanked God for granting her another opportunity of doing a good action. "This," cried she, "will perhaps be the last time. Oh! let me enjoy it while I may!" As she said this, she drew out her purse, which contained ten Louis, and gave it to the poor woman, just as the carriage drove on. Clara, certain of carrying with her the cordial blessings of

an unfortunate being, felt her courage revive, and her forebodings decrease.

Clara was made to travel night and day without stopping. She wished to put some questions to the German; but she knew that he did not understand French. His name was Schauritz. He was a man about five and fifty, with a rough visage, and a phlegmatic disposition, which nothing on earth could move. He was honest and well behaved; but had no idea that there was any other object in life than that of amassing money, and his whole attachment to his masters consisted in not robbing them, in not judging their actions, in scrupulously obeying the orders they gave him, and in not quitting them so long as he was well paid. Schau-

ritz was not a man of delicacy of feeling; but a more perfect servant did not exist.

After a journey of two days and a half they arrived at Rosmal Castle, at eight o'clock in the morning. Clara felt her heart dreadfully oppressed on entering this spacious, lonely, and ruinous old mansion, which had the appearance of a fortress. The taciturn Schauritz conducted her immediately to apartments on the second floor, where he left her by herself, and, as he went away, he took care to double-lock all the doors, and carry the keys away with him.

Schauritz, believing that Clara had murdered a child, saw nothing extraordinary in her being made a prisoner for the rest of her life. Besides, as he never reflected but upon his interest, he did not give himself the



trouble to think on this event; he considered robbers and murderers only as distinct orders of beings thrown upon the earth like wild beasts. He was not surprised at any of their actions; and as he classed all men in a similar manner, he was equally incapable of astonishment, indulgence, and indignation. He went up to Clara's room again to carry her trunks, for he had been ordered not to let the maid go near her. Having put the trunks down, he gave Clara to understand that he wanted to examine what they contained, hoping to find a casket of jewels, which, in consequence of his master's orders, he would not have failed to seize. He was extremely dissatisfied at finding nothing but linen and clothes. Clara was obliged to untie her pockets and give them

to Schauritz, who was no better pleased with this search, for he saw neither money nor jewels; Clara having contrived to conceal from him a gold enamelled heart, on which she set a great value, having worn it in her bosom from the time she was ten years old. It was the first present she ever received from Germany. On one side of it was engraven the name of *Elisa*; and on the other that of *Gustavus*. It opened, and within, round a sheaf of light-coloured hair, were these words : *Ever keep this first pledge.*

Clara now examined, with an attention mingled with fear, the four rooms of her apartments : opening the windows, she saw that they overlooked a terrace, the wall of which was bathed by the Rhone. The sight of that rapid river, rolling its waves

turbulently under her windows, revived in her mind the most horrid ideas; nor could she banish them till she had recourse to her prayer-book. Night increased her apprehensions. Notwithstanding the fatigue of a laborious journey, she did not fall asleep till it was broad day-light. She now thought that she had nothing to fear from Schauritz, guessing, that the execution of the crime would be trusted to no one, and that he who had conceived the idea of it meant to take the commission of it entirely upon himself. Now all her dread turned upon the arrival of Montalban; the slightest noise she heard, or thought she heard, in this solitary mansion, struck her with terror. On the third night after her arrival, hearing some dogs bark, she had no doubt that it was the signal of the

event so fearful to her. In the power of the barbarian who had accused her of his own crime, who had with dry eyes seen her go to the scaffold, and who had not shown the slightest mark of pity for her, though she was sacrificing herself to him, it was impossible for her to be blind to the imminent danger that threatened her. All her courage sunk at the thought of a fate so deplorable. Was it not enough to lose her life? Must she perish by an execrable crime; by the hand of a father? . . . . She endeavoured to prepare herself for the terrible moment: but she was ignorant of the nature of the death intended her; and her mind, intent upon it, anxious to guess it, or rather figuring to itself a thousand different tortures and shocking deaths, could not settle in meditation, or apply its

powers to prayer. This lukewarmness, for which she bitterly reproached herself, was not the least of her torments. When Schauritz brought up her supper, conceiving that her father was coming, she mechanically flew to the farther end of the room, and hid herself behind the curtains of her bed. Not seeing her, the German called her in a solemn, indifferent tone; and his hoarse voice was more pleasing to her ear than the most delightful melody. Wishing to know whether Montalban was arrived, she tried to gain information from Schauritz, but he not understanding, and unable to answer, did not even seem to hear: without leaving off for an instant what he was about, or even looking at her, he went on, with his accustomed phlegm, laying the cloth; he listened as indifferently as if he

had been perfectly deaf, and he left her without having shown the slightest sign of attention to what she said. Clara was now startled by a new thought; she conceived the dishes sent up to her were poisoned by Montalban, and she eat bread alone. She did not go to bed. The next morning she slept by snatches, lying on a couch, continually starting out of her sleep, thinking that she heard her doors opening, and even that she distinguished the dreadful voice of her father at a distance. Through the whole of that day she ate nothing but bread. At two o'clock in the afternoon she opened her window; the wind was high, the sky stormy, and the Rhone rough; terror converts every thing into presages: superstition is the offspring of

misfortune and fear. "What a gloomy day!" said Clara, "how suited to introduce guilt!"... She cast a melancholy look at the enchanting banks of the Rhone; and her heart softening as she contemplated the delightful sight, she took a solemn leave of all nature.... Then quickly closing the window, she threw herself into a chair, and gave a free course to her tears.

About six o'clock in the evening, she plainly heard a carriage drive in to one of the courts of the castle... It was immediately followed by an extraordinary bustle throughout the house: people went up and down stairs, the doors were opened with a clatter, and in all the passages there was somebody walking. "This," said Clara, "this is no illusion; he

is come, . . . it is he . . . .” In half an hour Schauritz appeared : he looked agitated, and nothing could be more striking than a trace of emotion in a face by nature so immovable. Schauritz went up to Clara, took her by the hand, and dragged her away with him. Clara, terrified, made a resistance ; on which Schauritz would have taken her up by force, but that she determined to go with him rather than be carried in a man’s arms. This act of modesty and dignity gave her new strength : for all the springs of the soul have a wonderful dependence upon one another. Clara suffered herself to be led, with a full persuasion that it was to death. The German took her down to the first floor, and putting her into the best



apartments of the house, locked her in. The blood froze in her veins, at the thought of being in rooms where she had a right to every protection, and where she expected every instant to see her murderer appear. How did she now grieve that she had been snatched from the scaffold ! How regret the loss of the venerable Father Arsene ! “ Oh ! could I,” cried she, “ at this fearful moment only hear his loved voice, and receive his blessing ! . . . . ” She fell on her knees ; and raising her eyes, they fixed on a picture representing a beautiful woman suckling her child. . . . . Not doubting it to be the portrait of her mother, her face was immediately bathed in tears. “ O my mother ! ” cried she, “ those are your features ; and that unfortunate

child in your arms, is no doubt myself ! . . . You smile as you look at it ! . . . Smile ! Good heavens ! . . . Oh ! had you been able to look into futurity, with what horror would you have descended to the tomb ! . . . Why, why did I not die on your bosom ? . . . He will not, surely, deprive me of life before this revered image ; this picture will shield me . . . ” As she said these words, Schauritz returned, and beckoned her to follow him . . . “ It is then all over ! . . . ” said Clara in a faint voice. “ O my God ! have mercy on the murderer, and on the victim ! . . . ” She could say no more ; her words died away upon her pale lips ; and, though she did not lose her senses, she fell into a state of stupor and weakness that prevented her from walking, or even

standing upon her legs. Schauritz gave her his arm, or, rather, carried her as he hurried from the apartment. After passing through three very large rooms, he took her through a long, dark, and narrow gallery, at the end of which they went down a little private staircase, and came out upon the terrace. Clara distinctly heard the roaring of the waves of the Rhone, which at that moment was extremely agitated. "Now, then, I know, thought she, unable to articulate a word, "now I know the kind of death I am doomed to suffer! I am to be thrown into the river! . . . " The moon, hid by the clouds, gave no light. . . . The whistling of the wind, the boisterous beating of the waves, tremendous peals of thunder rolling at a distance, dark-

ness, rendered more striking by the vivid flashes of lightning which every now and then seemed to set the banks on fire, all, in Clara's eyes, appeared in dreadful unison with the horror of her thoughts. It looked as if Nature herself had rose in arms against a crime that violated all her laws. Schauritz suddenly stopped, and in a loud and dismal voice said five or six words in German, which were repeated by echoes on both banks of the river. In a moment three whistles were heard; and Schauritz opening a door, went out with Clara to the river-side; along which he had walked about thirty paces, when a bright flash of lightning discovered to Clara a boat quite close to her, in which there was a man alone, wrapped up in a cloke, which entirely con-

creaked his face. . . . " *It is he !* " said Clara, shuddering . . . . She saw him ! she knew him ! and she already felt the blow that was to end her life ; for she imagined that she should be stabbed before she was thrown into the river . . . . Her hair stood an end . . . Schauritz delivered her, half dead, into the hands of the man, and immediately disappeared. . . . Clara, motionless and petrified, shut her eyes, that she might never again have even a glimpse of the assassin. Her languid heart no longer had the power to beat ; she scarcely breathed, yet still retained her feeling and her senses . . . . She remained thus a moment suspended between life and death . . . . Suddenly . . . . But what words can express her surprise ! what ideas paint her emotion, when

instead of the assassin's grasp which she expected to precede the blow from his dagger, she felt a gentle pressure from the arms in which she was supported, and, listening, distinguished sighs and groans! . . . . It was no mockery of fancy . . . . Her hand was wet with tears that flowed not from herself! . . . . Gracious heaven! Can the murderer of Julian, the unnatural father who could sacrifice his daughter, be susceptible of pity? . . . . Has injured Nature resumed her rights, and is she about to triumph over such unspeakable barbarity? . . . . These strange notions, far from tranquillizing Clara, excited a new kind of dread . . . . If cruelty be victorious, this conflict will but have prolonged her sufferings; if pity conquer, what a scene must follow

these moments of horror ! How were the embraces of this inhuman father to be received ? How was his inconceivable and tardy tenderness to be treated ? . . . . How kiss the hand stained with blood ? . . . . How put on even but the shadow of filial respect ? . . . . These thoughts ran rapidly through Clara's imagination, and the instruments of a cruel death could not have appeared more terrible to her . . . . . Meanwhile the clouds which had obscured the moon began to disperse ; the day broke most serenely ; the wind subsided, and the violent motion of the boat, which was fastened to the bank, was no longer felt. Under these favourable circumstances, the arms which supported Clara raised her, and seated her on a bench, and she found

herself opposite to the object of her terror, whose face might now, by the light of the moon, be seen bathed in tears . . . . Clara ventured, with awe, to raise towards him a timid, melancholy eye; but no sooner did she see his features, than she recovered all her faculties, all her sensibility; and prostrating herself, exclaimed with a transport impossible to be described, "O my deliverer!" . . . . She at length recognized her venerable friend; she embraced the knees of Father Arsene! . . . "My daughter," said he, "it is God whom you must thank: it is he who saves you, he who vouchsafes to calm this raging tempest, that you may not be buried in the waves; as your only earthly aid, for some hours to come on this dangerous river, is the feeble



arm of an old man . . . . Fear not; God, the protector of innocence, will steer our little bark . . . . A child and an old man, who trust themselves to Providence, will not be deserted on the waters . . . . But let the impious tremble, be his ship as stout and as well built as it may, an abyss is under him! . . . . We, who place no reliance on our strength or our skill, shall safely ply our oar under the care of the Most High . . . . See, my child, see how the clouds break, disperse towards the horizon, and open to us the azure sky! . . . . The thunder has ceased, the air is fresh and sweet . . . . Let us be grateful for this sudden calm . . . . Let us adore Him who rules the elements. . . . He who disperses tempests in the air and on the waters can, my

daughter, when he pleases, quell also the storms of life, and open to the view days of serenity and joy . . . .” Clara listened to Father Arsene with rapture ; she could not take her eyes off him : she had passed suddenly from a state of dreadful agitation and the height of terror to sweet security and perfect ease ; and she enjoyed exquisitely the happy change, as miraculous as unthought of . . . . “ Father,” said she, pressing the trembling hands of the pious old man in hers, “ it is to your godliness I owe my safety ; heaven watches over the unfortunate whom you protect ! . . . In spite of my deplorable lot you again bind me to a life so frequently endangered, and which you have saved . . . You have just convinced me that my heart can still feel all the

emotions, all the transports of the liveliest and purest joy ! One rapturous subject of remembrance is now in my power ; that moment, when casting my eyes upon you in this memorable night, I knew your loved face ! . . . Come, my father, let us give ourselves up to the stream of this river ; it will bear us to some happy bank, where we may find a place of rest . . . ” —

“ Yes, my daughter,” replied Father Arsene, “ I have already chosen for you in my mind that place of rest, where you will enjoy perfect tranquillity : you shall know all to-morrow, at present let us think only of our navigation.” Here, Father Arsene made Clara sit down on some fresh straw that was spread in the boat ; and she rested her head on a board which served as a bench, be-

ing so weak that she could not support herself. When she was thus settled, Father Arsene untied the boat, put off, and began to row. He continued rowing for an hour, when his strength failing, the old man could no longer manage the oars, but was obliged to take Clara's advice and leave the boat to itself, which the wind and stream, being both favourable, directed to the place for which it was intended. He raised to heaven those unnerved hands, which were now useless but in prayer, and cried : " Great God ! to your fatherly arms I commit this child !" Saying this he rose, full of confidence, and resting on the oars, continued standing, to attend the better to the way of the boat : he alternately contemplated the sky studded with stars, and Cla-

ra, whose whole attitude was a picture of the sweetest repose. After all that she had suffered, after having been for six bitter days a prisoner, in constant expectation of a horrid crime by which she was to lose her life, she enjoyed a delicious calm. Reflecting that she was under the care of the most virtuous of men, she took pleasure in the thought of being at the mercy of the waves, and without human assistance: with a conscience-like hers, this was to feel more immediately under the all-powerful protection of God. Yielding less to fatigue than to the pleasantness of her thoughts, she gave herself up entirely to Providence, at ease for the present, and careless of the future; and as she was falling into a pleasing slumber, which in-

fused a refreshing balm into her veins, she breathed this address to her Maker: "O my God! we are floating among rocks, in a slender bark, on a tremendous river; but Thou art with us! . . . . Why should we be afraid? . . . . Look upon the gentle slumber stealing over my senses as a tribute of my faith. . . ." Her heavy eye-lids now closed, and she fell fast asleep. The good old man tenderly watched over her; he looked at her with a complacent smile, and his eyes full of tears. . . . . What a picture did this little bark present! A sight worthy of attracting the Creator's notice: under features the most respectable and interesting appeared the happy security of innocence and virtue! . . . . Clara had enchanting dreams: she thought that

she saw a happy group of angels surrounding her boat; some hovered over her head, others imparted a quick and gentle movement to the vessel; she thought herself gently rocked upon the water, and viewing delightful prospects. A thousand consoling and sublime passages in the Holy Scriptures presented themselves to her imagination: she thought that she heard celestial and prophetic voices repeating to her these divine words:

*Unto the godly there ariseth up  
light in the darkness . . .*

*He that dwelleth under the defence  
of the Most High, shall abide under  
the shadow of the Almighty . . .*

*He shall defend thee under his  
wings . . . his truth shall be thy  
buckler . . .*

*God has given his angels charge  
over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. .*

*The Lord has shown his strength in  
our favour . . .*

*Those who sow in tears shall reap in  
joy . . .\**

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*\* Psalms.*





## NOTE.

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NOTE FOR PAGE 157, AFTER THE WORDS,

“ In this abode, particularly, is found all  
“ that can best excite admiration and touch the  
“ heart ; supreme power and mercy, weakness  
“ and gratitude.”

No notice has yet been taken of convents of this kind, which are here described with great exactness. In general, very false and very injurious accounts have of late times been given of convents, those accounts being the productions of Protestants, or of men totally unacquainted with the subjects, and who have published as facts, conjectures that are extremely erroneous, and frequently ridiculous. Men could see no monasteries but such as were governed by abbesses ; those were possessed of great wealth, and kept a kind of court : though their morals were irreproachable, ambitious views were sometimes found among the inhabitants of them, and consequently a species of rivalry and bickerings ;

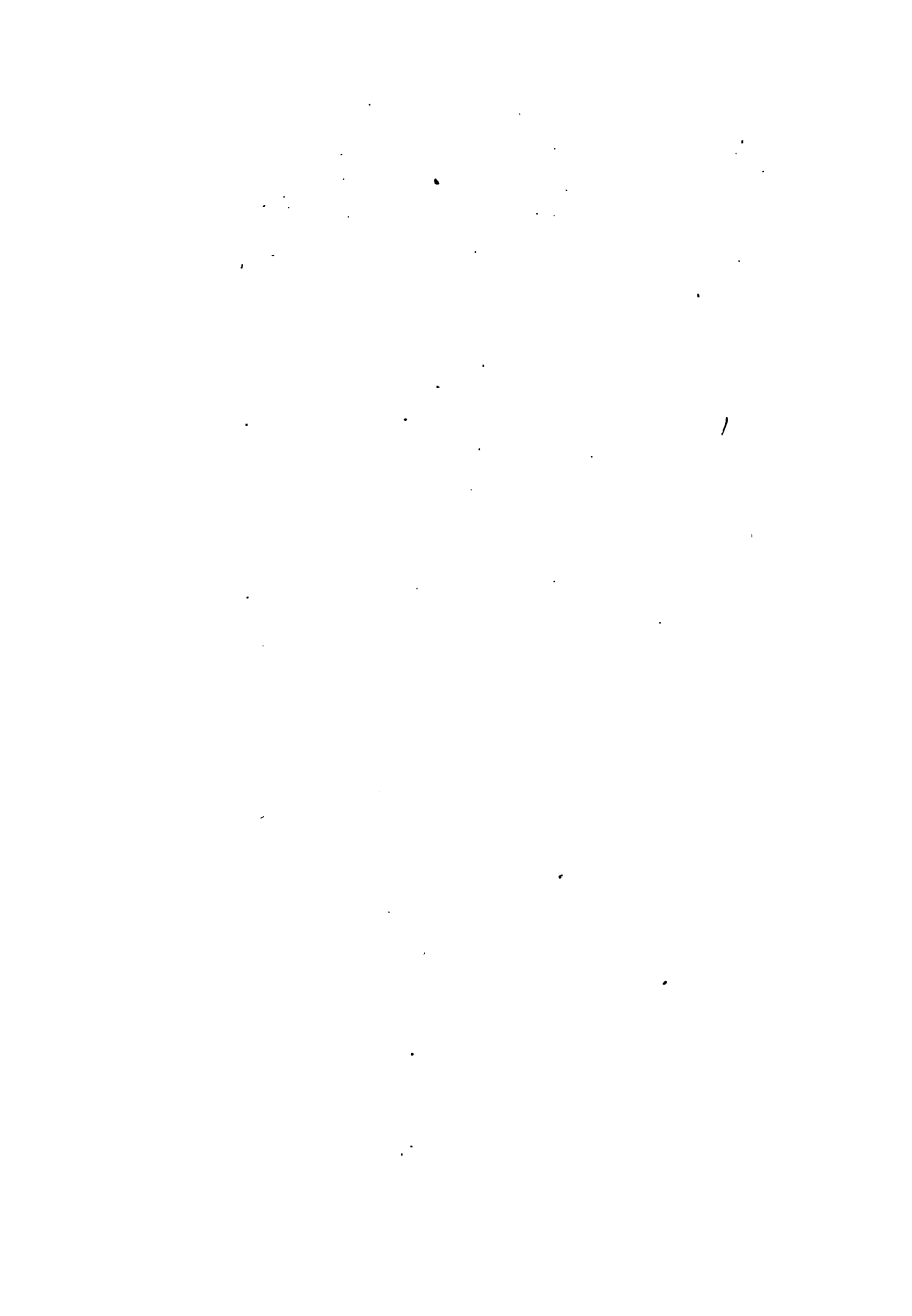
but much less frequent and less violent than is commonly imagined. Nothing of this kind was to be seen in convents governed by triennial prioresses. There, the government was carried on without pomp; it bestowed no showy distinction, and was a very fatiguing charge; accordingly there was no intriguing for it; it was the interest of all that it should be given to the *most worthy*, particularly in the convents devoted to the education of youth, and the elections always proved that the votes were the results of reason and not of cabal.

END OF VOL. I.

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